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THE Atlantic

MARCH 2007

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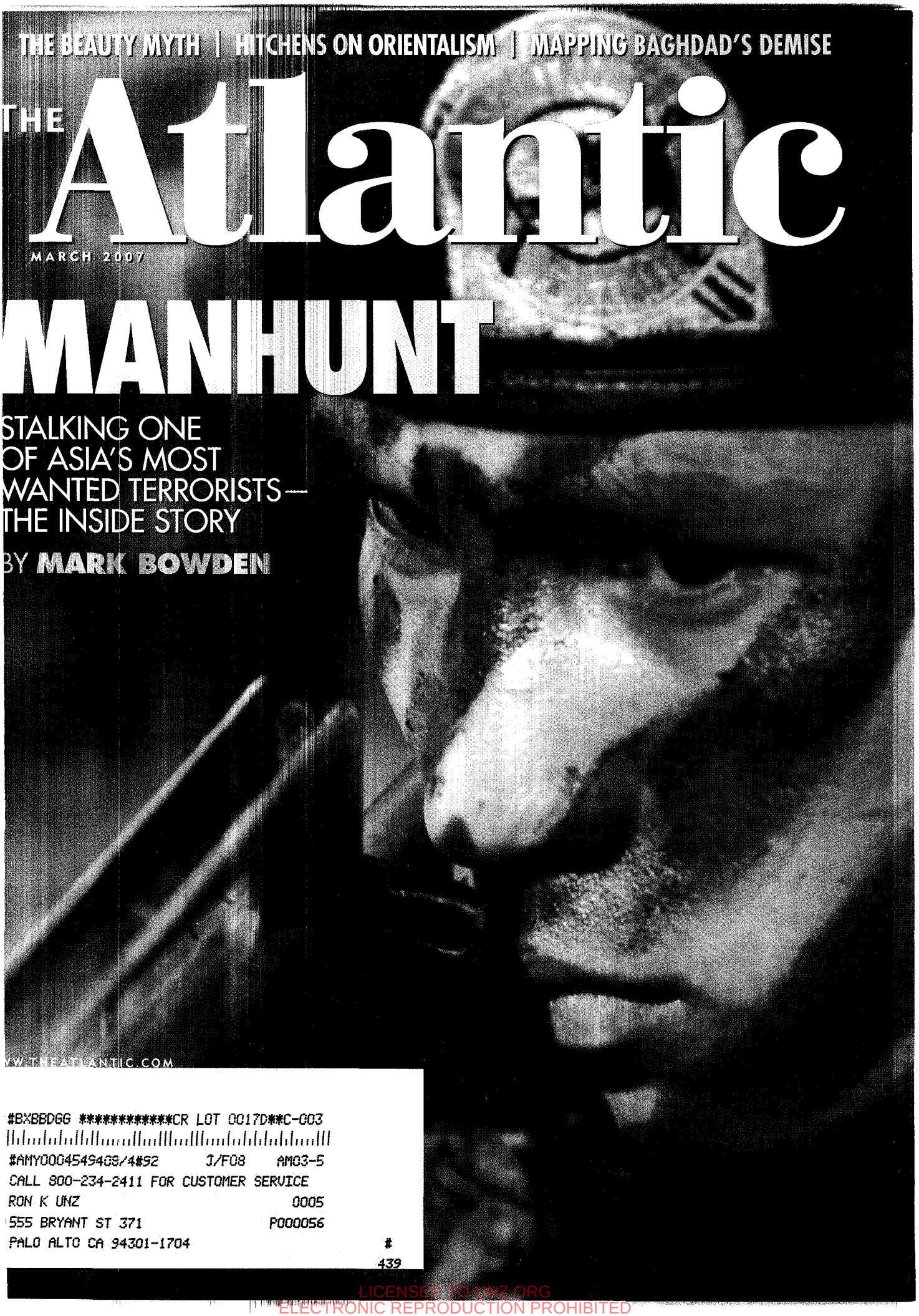
BY **MARK BOWDEN**



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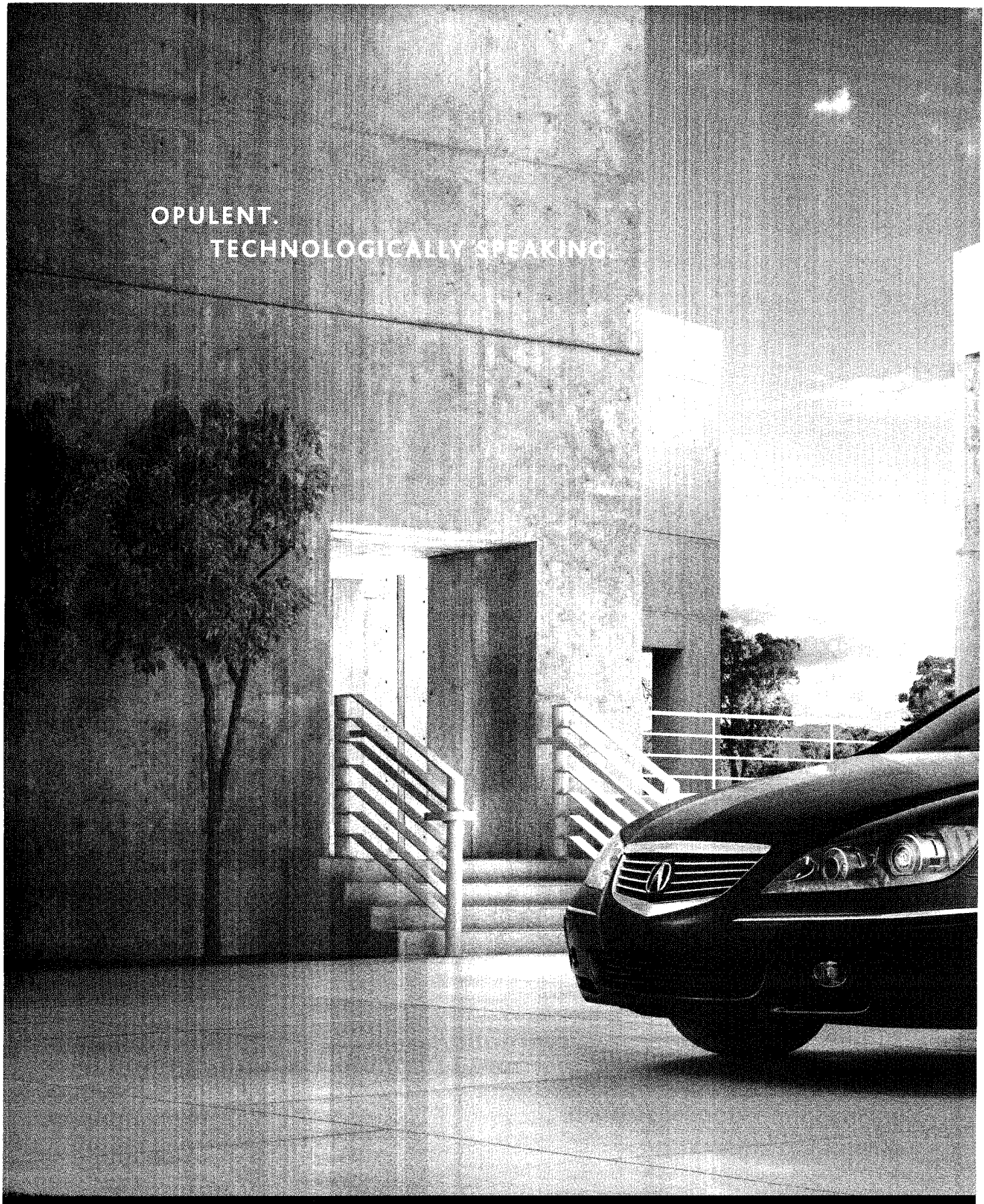

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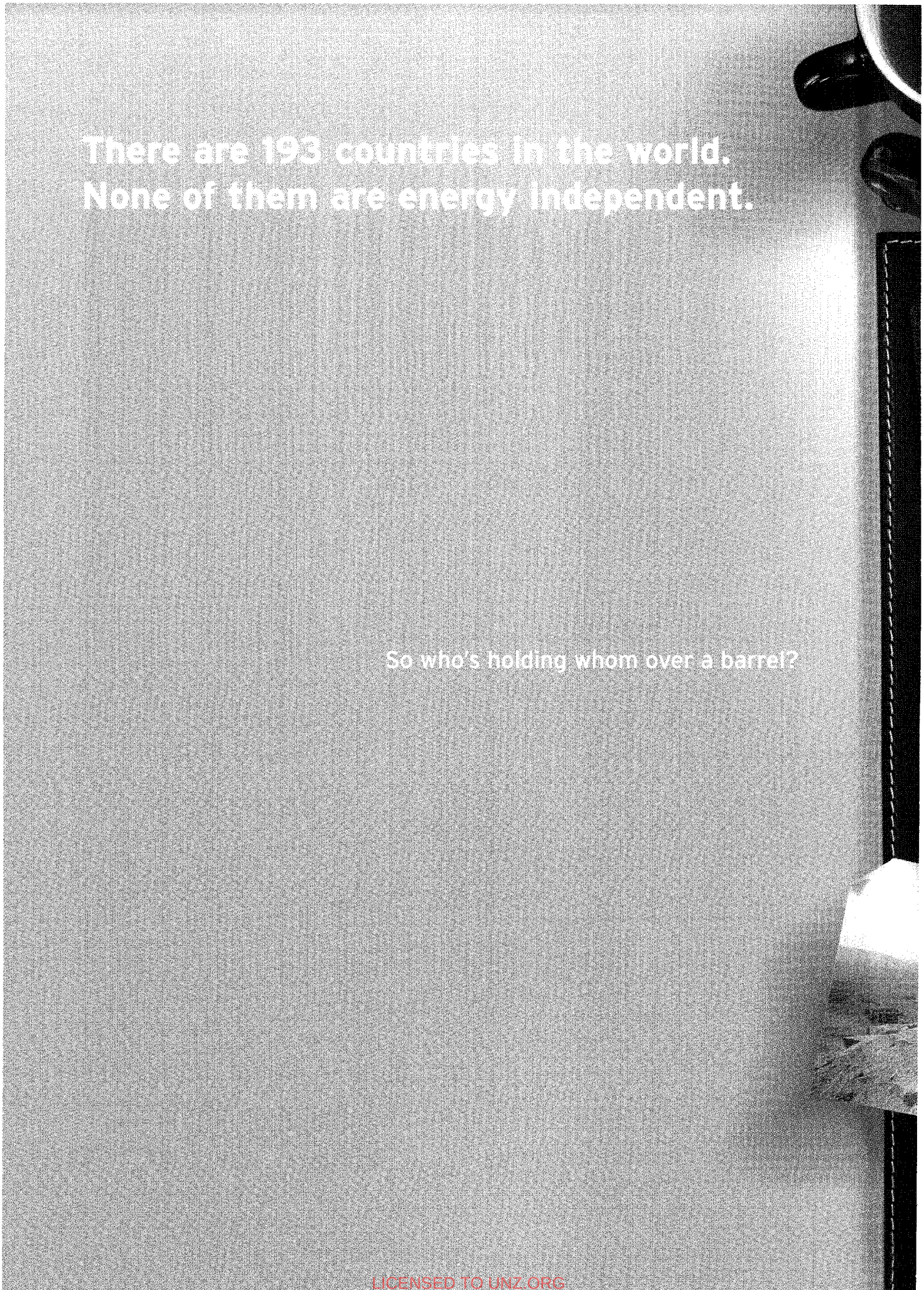

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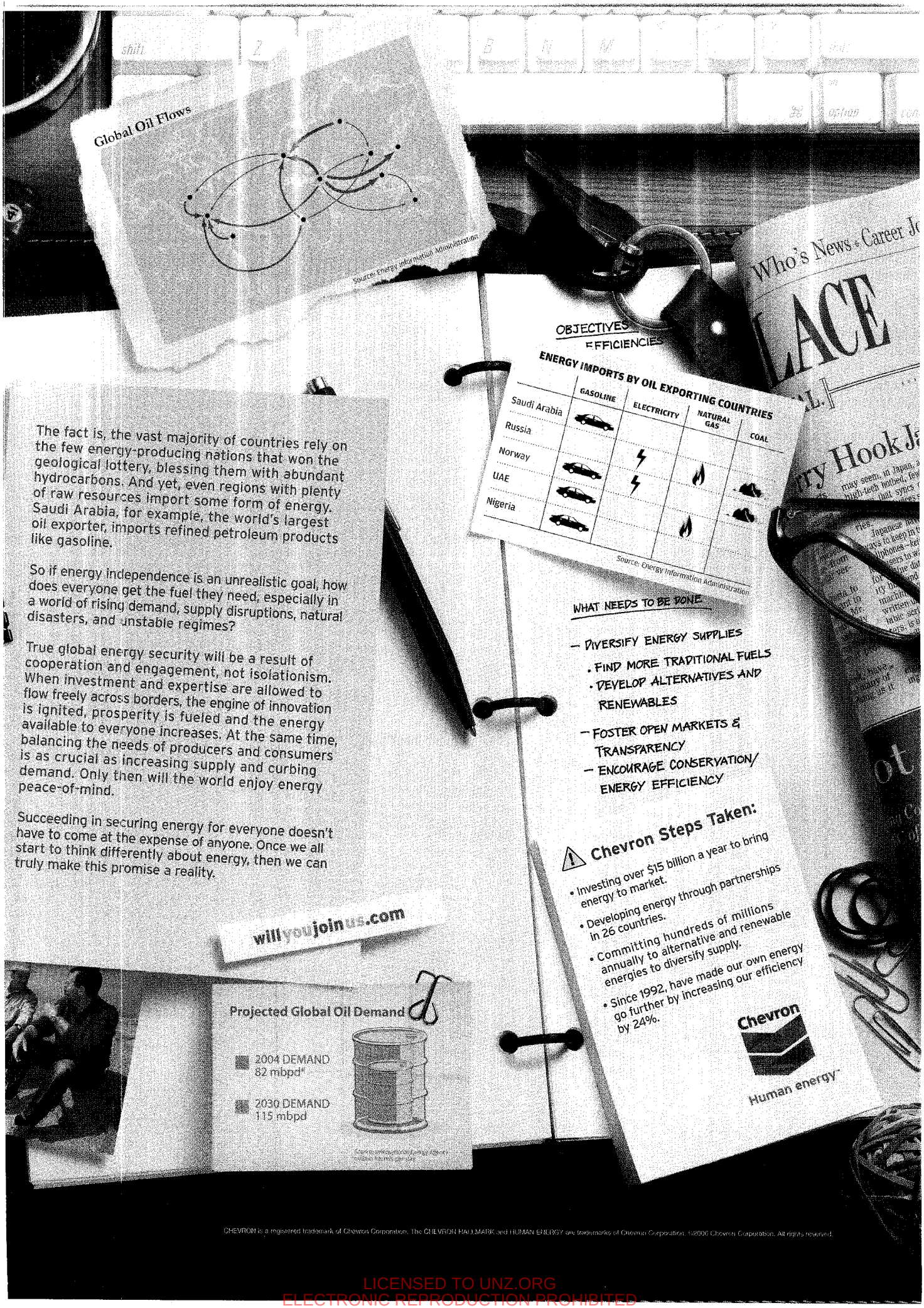

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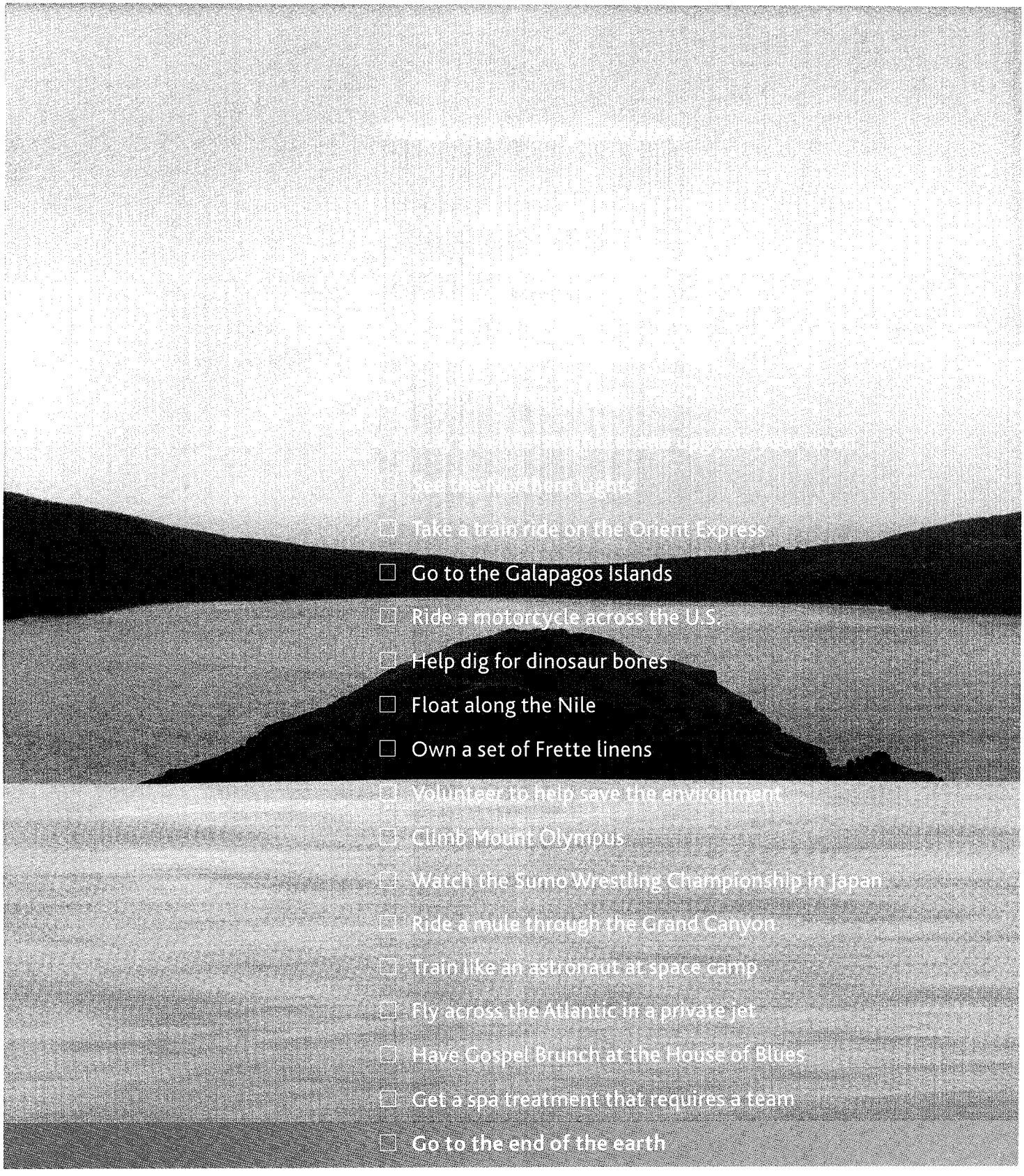

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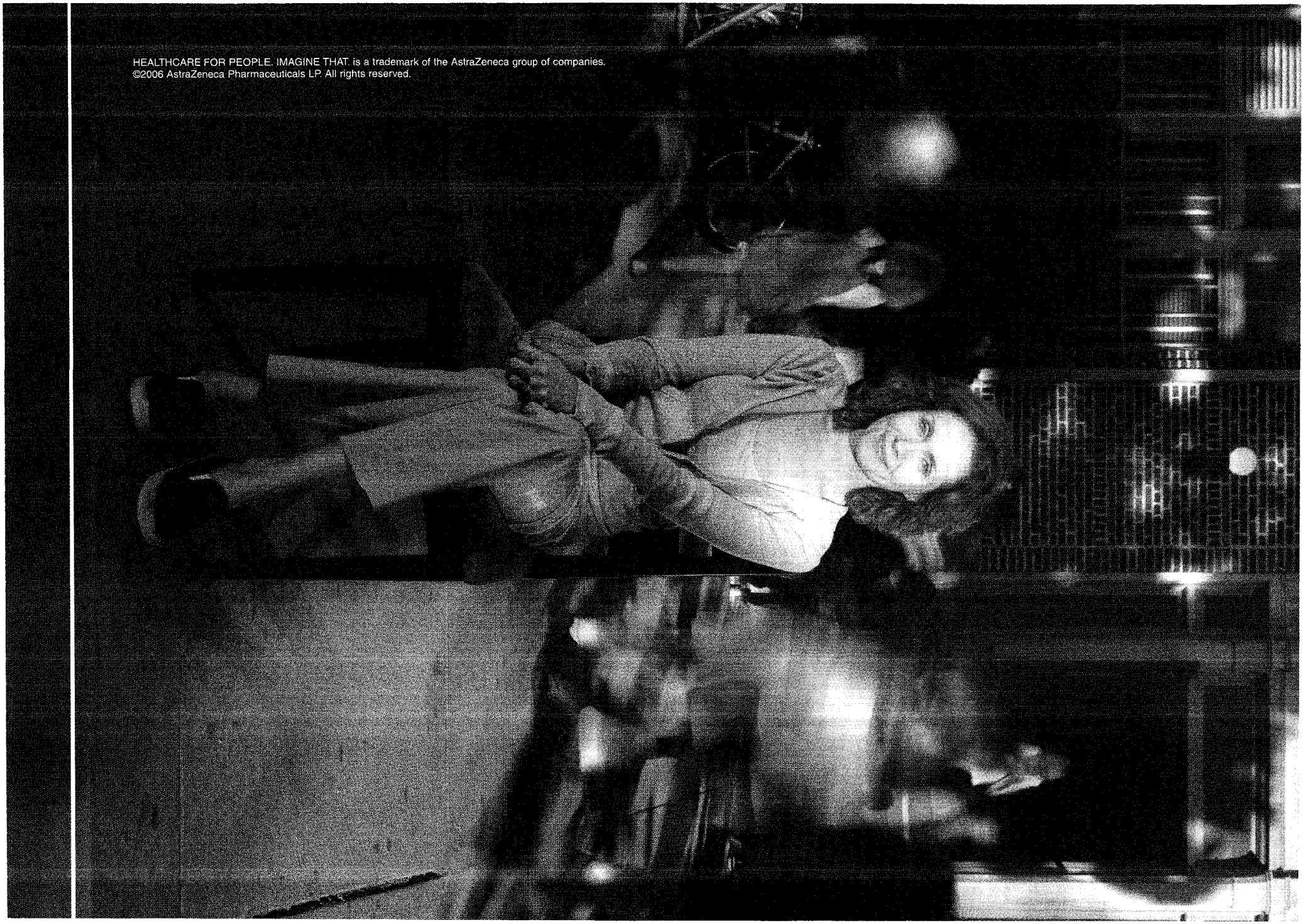
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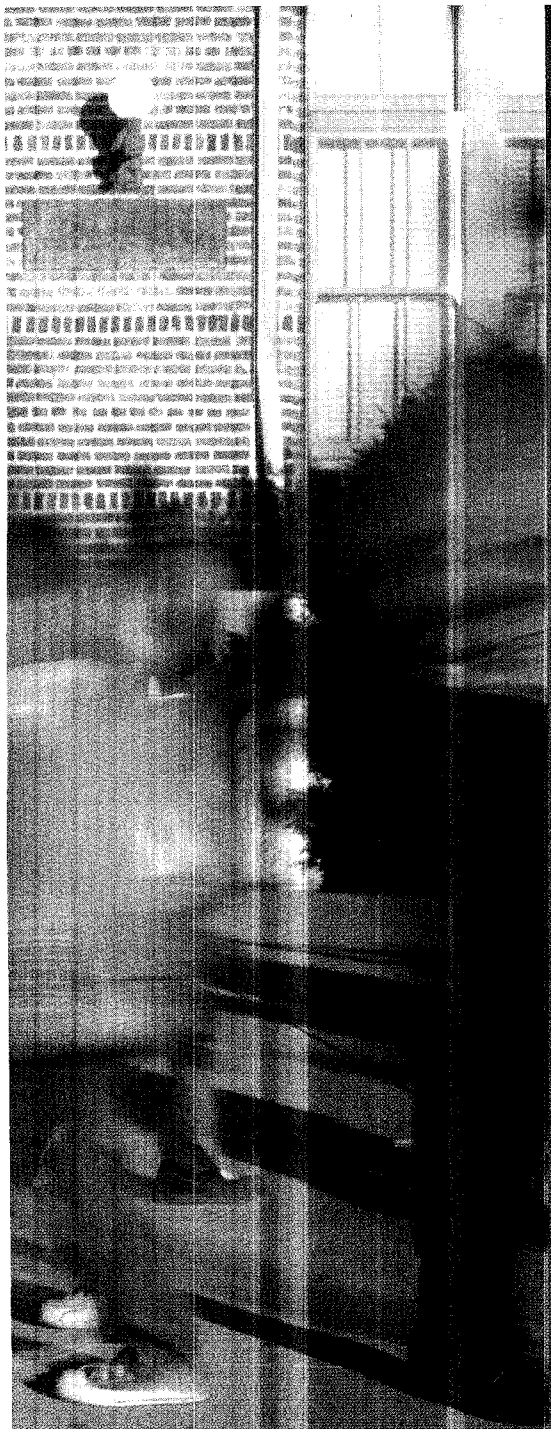

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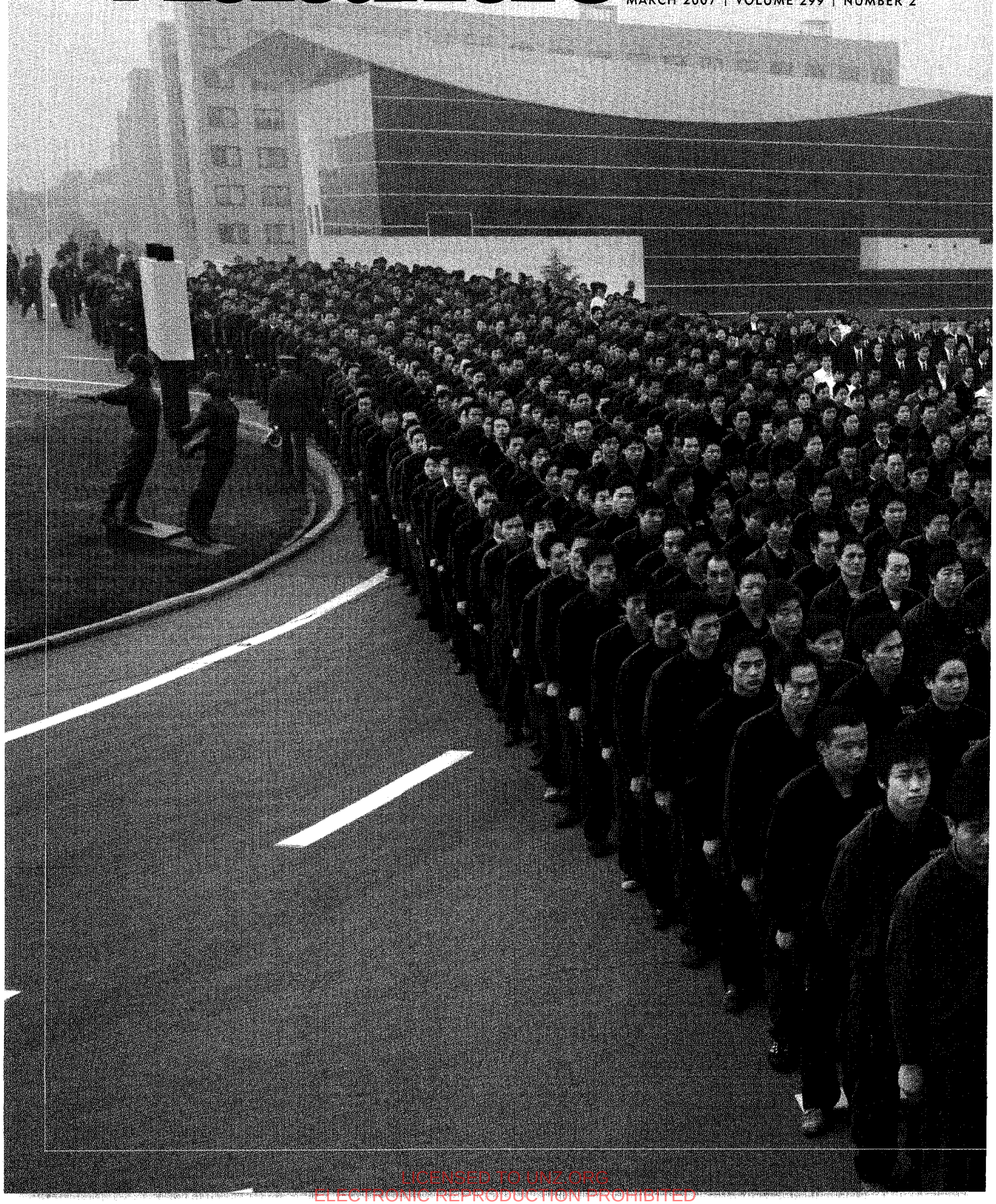

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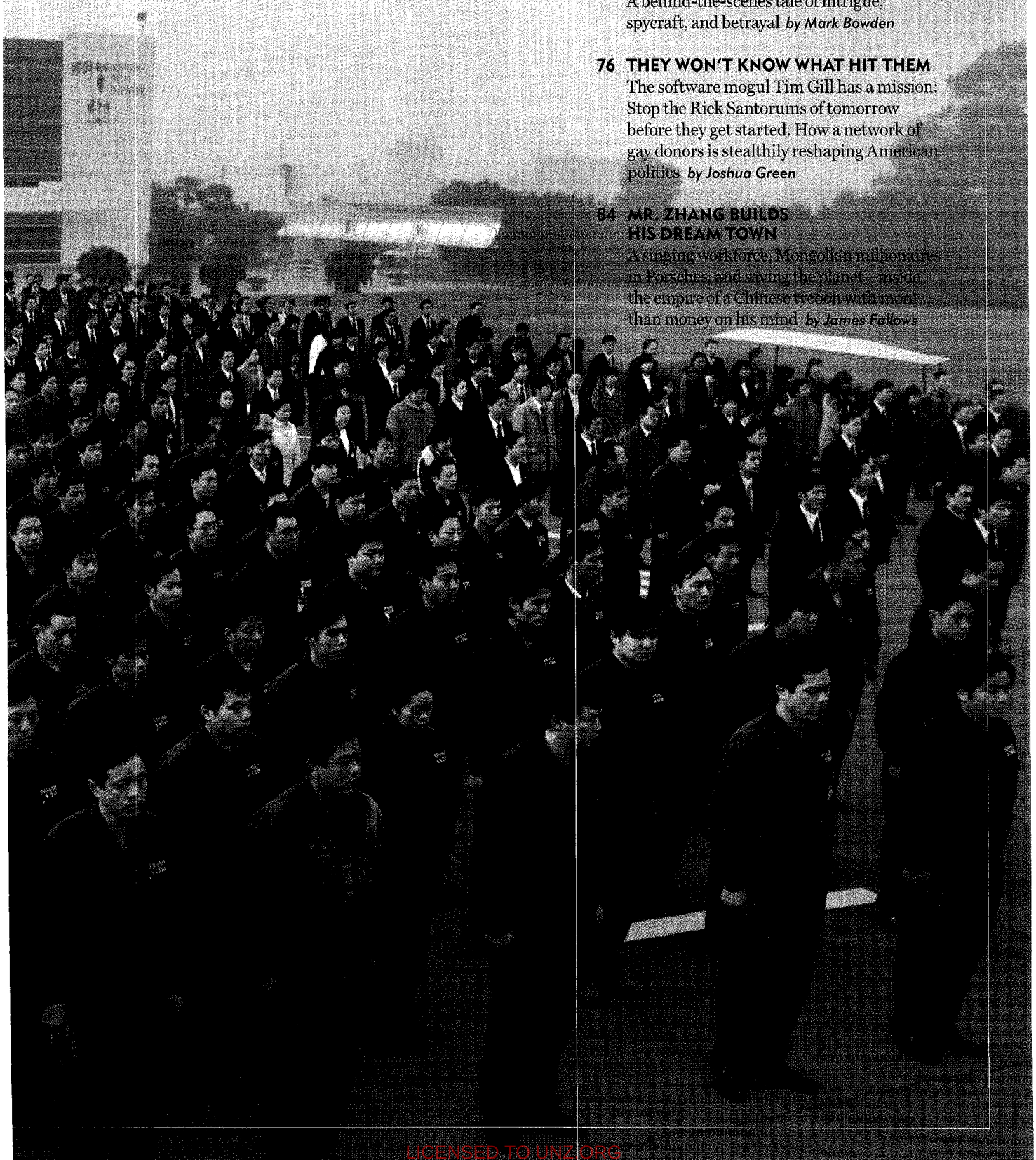

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The Issue in Brief

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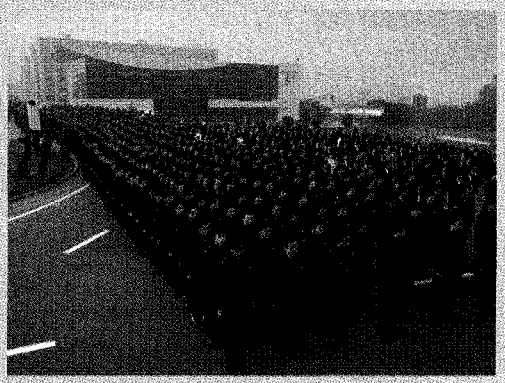

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Employees of the Chinese air-conditioning magnate Zhang Yue muster for a Monday-morning flag-raising ceremony on Zhang's corporate campus. James Fallows profiles Zhang and his private empire in "Mr. Zhang Builds His Dream Town."

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL CHRISTOPHER BROWN

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Watch CIA surveillance footage from the manhunt chronicled in Mark Bowden's cover story, plus video interviews with several of the story's major players.

INTERVIEW: BETTER THAN SEX
Joan Sewell talks about her new book, *I'd Rather Eat Chocolate*, and the politically incorrect reality that most married women just aren't that into sex.

SLIDESHOW: AT HOME WITH MR. ZHANG
Atlantic national correspondent James Fallows narrates photos from Chinese tycoon Zhang Yue's one-of-a-kind company town.

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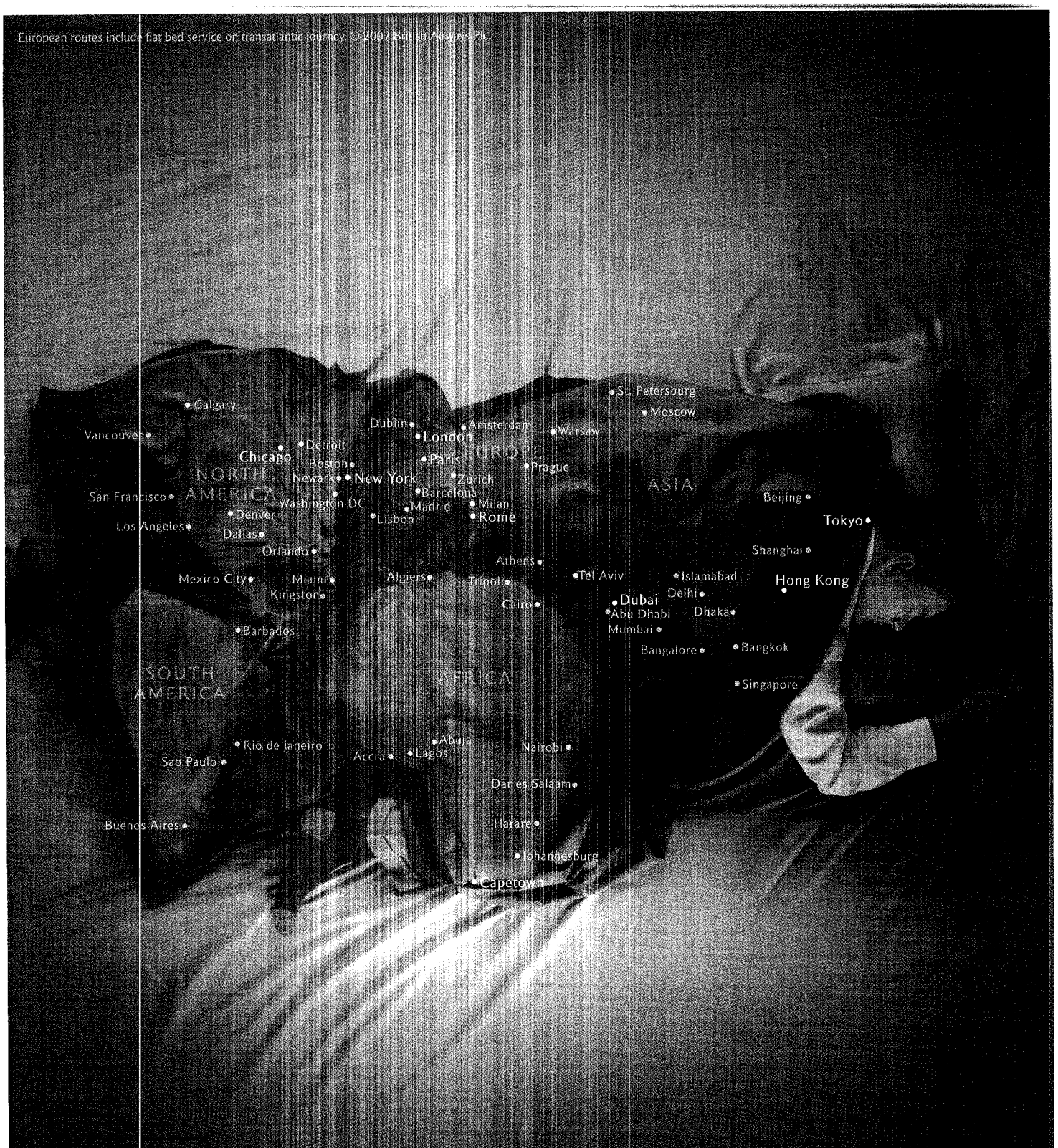

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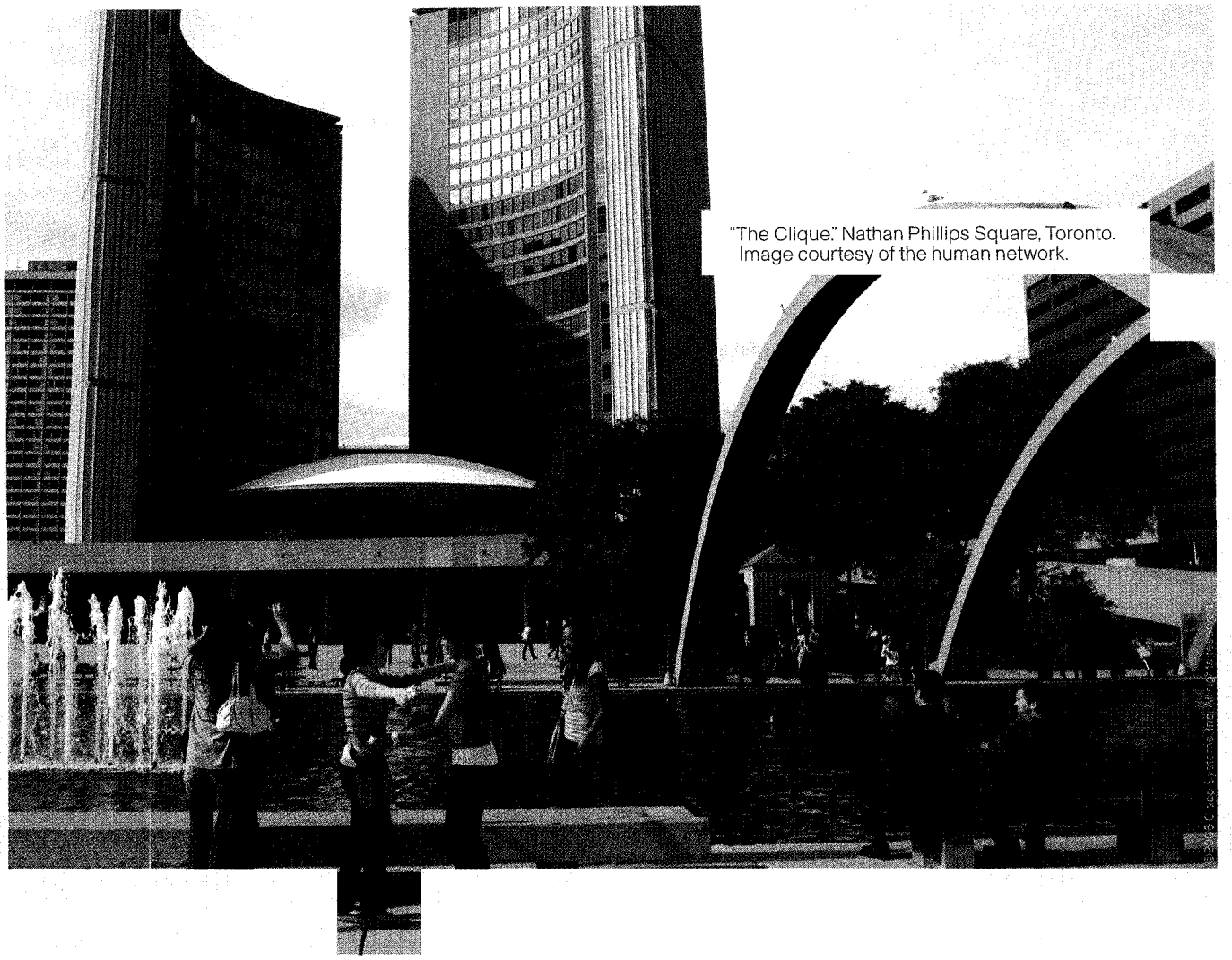

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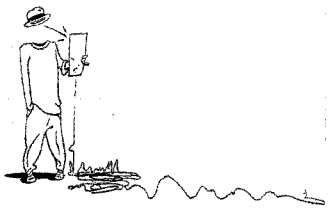

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

INFLUENCE IN AMERICA

I was surprised and disappointed to see that not a single American from the pre-Revolutionary period was included in your feature "They Made America" (December *Atlantic*). More specifically, I was surprised that a definition of what constitutes "American" was not among the five challenges faced by your distinguished panel.

I would posit that American ideals had their roots in men and women living in America before the United States ever existed. Indeed, were it not for certain enterprising souls, the United States—as we know it—may never have come into being. I can understand why the panel might omit Thomas Hariot, John Winthrop, or Anne Bradstreet; however, omitting Captain John Smith and William Bradford seems unpardonable, even if their citizenship was technically English.

Smith was one of America's staunchest promoters and gave us our notion of the new country as a land of plenty and opportunity. Long before Ben Franklin, Smith represented our iconic rags-to-riches story; in varying retellings of the Pocahontas story, he gave us one of our first legends; and, of course, it was Smith's tenacity that kept the first permanent English colony, Jamestown, afloat during its most tenuous times.

William Bradford also merits our recognition. The first governor of the Plymouth Plantation, Bradford led the Pilgrims to the shores of New England. He not only recorded our earliest history, but also established the idea of America as a land of destiny, and a place where one was free to worship in one's own way.

George C. Scouten
Columbia, S.C.

It was striking that your list of influential Americans did not include any playwrights. More remarkably, your companion article, which otherwise analyzed the composition of the list quite meticulously, did not even find this absence of playwrights worthy of comment. In contrast, a 2002 BBC series ranked Shakespeare the fifth "Greatest Briton," and in a recent poll by French public television, Molière was rated the eighth "Greatest Frenchman of All Time." Surely Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, Lillian Hellman, and, more recently, August Wilson and Wendy Wasserstein have shaped our country significantly.

Jacob M. Appel
New York, N.Y.

I cannot imagine how your list of influential Americans omitted the late Milton Friedman. Friedman did more than any other twentieth-century American to make the United States prosperous—more than any president, business leader, or technologist. He was a trailbreaking economist, winning the Nobel Prize in 1976. He provided the intellectual framework that enabled Paul Volcker and Ronald Reagan (No. 17 on your list) to heal the U.S. economy when it was on track to become a high-inflation, high-unemployment banana republic in the style of Peronist Argentina. His work was also a major reason why the years since 1982 have had only minor, shallow pauses in increasing American prosperity.

Len Winner
Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif.

In "They Made America," your entry for Dr. Jonas Salk describes his vaccine as having eradicated polio. While it is true that Dr. Salk developed the first vaccine against polio, the disease is still in circulation today in some parts of the globe. The World Health Organization, with the support of Rotary International, is now in the advanced stages of an effort to eradicate the disease primarily with the Oral Polio Vaccine, the vaccine developed by Dr. Albert Sabin. Indeed, the elimination of polio in most countries was accomplished with Sabin's vaccine, not Salk's.

Stewart Simonson
Washington, D.C.

Like thousands of other readers, I eagerly perused your listing of the 100 Most Influential Americans, and I was disturbed to find myself missing. I've spoken to my mother, my children, and other objective sources, and they all confirm that, even taking into account challenges such as "the collaborative nature of achievement" and "the power of pop culture," my influence still has a pervasiveness that is well-nigh legendary. Am I funnier than Andrew Carnegie? Absolutely. More attractive than Susan B. Anthony? Without question. Do I possess greater musical talent than Frederick Law Olmsted, a sunnier disposition than John Brown, better teeth than George Washington? The facts speak for themselves.

And yet, and yet ... your panel chose to ignore these attributes and instead embrace a list that includes historical footnotes such as Woodrow Wilson, who was unable to play Ping-Pong (which I excel at), Eli Whitney (who certainly cannot type ninety words per minute, as I can), and Lewis and Clark (who don't even have first names!).

What do I have to do—die? (No, I see Bill Gates is up there.) Invent the cotton gin? (Already been done.) Resign the presidency? (Ditto.) Well, what's done is done. It's probably too late to ask you to pulp the issue, and I imagine I shall keep reading *The Atlantic*, but honestly—have you no sense of decency, sirs, at long last?

John Spritz
Portland, Maine

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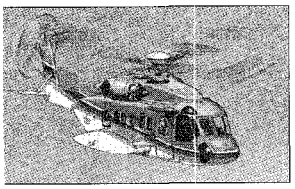

"If a man is in need of rescue,
an airplane can come in and throw flowers on him and that's about all.
But a direct-lift aircraft could come in and save his life."
—Igor Sikorsky
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In the most challenging weather conditions, the S-92 can go 250 nautical miles, search for two hours, and return to base with fuel to spare. This is not even including in-flight refueling, which is also available.

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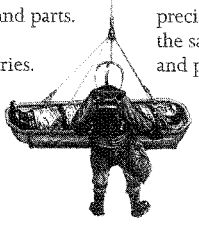

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DOUBTING CHAIN STORES

In focusing almost exclusively on the idea of "variety and comfort," Virginia Postrel's "In Praise of Chain Stores" (December *Atlantic*) ignores several far more important objections to retail homogenization. That these ubiquitous establishments make life more boring and less varied is little more than an ancillary complaint. The bigger objection to the likes of Wal-Mart, McDonald's, and Home Depot is that they hurt real people. They typically pay their workers abysmally low wages and offer virtually no benefits, treating them more like expendable pawns than human beings. (Some chains, including Starbucks, are notable exceptions to this rule.) They offer low prices by strong-arming small-scale manufacturers, desperate to stay alive at all, into economically unfavorable agreements. They grease government wheels to turn in their favor. They knowingly purchase products manufactured in Third World countries by exploited workers who toil under abominable conditions. They artificially deflate their prices just long enough to drive local mom-and-pop establishments out of business and then jack prices back up once they've cornered the market.

I have no desire for major chains to disappear from the American landscape (and I'd be naive to even think this were possible). As Postrel points out, their value and selection provide an important market segment for American consumers. However, I do wish they would play by a fair set of rules, instead of using their clout to create unfair advantages at the expense of the companies that manufacture their products, the individuals who staff their stores, and the small-business owners who compete with them.

Michelle Trela
Chesterfield, Mich.

Virginia Postrel replies:

I could happily devote a 1,500-word column to refuting each of Michelle Trela's heartfelt but undocumented complaints. Unfortunately, The Atlantic*'s readers (not to mention its editors) would soon tire of the endless chain-store series. Many of these criticisms, notably the "problem" of low prices, date back at least a century, to the rise of department stores and the spread of chain grocers like A&P. That's why so much of Emile Zola's* The Ladies' Paradise, *published in 1883, seems contemporary. Suffice it to say that we would not be better off, either as workers or as consumers, with a return to the old days of high-priced local monopolies.*

I focused on the "homogenization" critique because it is the most common current complaint among elites and because it is the only complaint that is actually about chains in general, rather than about a particular chain or store format. The activists who campaign to keep Ann Taylor, Crate & Barrel, and California Pizza Kitchen out of currently moribund downtowns are not doing so to save the high-paying jobs at Dottie's Boutique, Joe's Furniture Store, and Luigi's Pizzeria. They hate Starbucks, whatever its wages and benefits. Like local retailers who simply don't want the competition, they just don't like the idea of chains.

DOUBTING ELECTION RESULTS

Joshua Green's article on the pollsters' inaccuracies during the 2004 presidential election ("Do Polls Still Work?" November *Atlantic*) fails to consider that the 2004 exit polls may have been correct after all. Green starts with a predetermined conclusion for which he cites no official confirmation. There is much research and evidence to support the theory that the exit polls were right, and that the final count was manipulated—evidence that has sparked several lawsuits that the national media have ignored.

Exit polls are historically very accurate—so accurate that in most democracies, they are used to detect fraud. The discrepancy between the final outcome and the exit polls in the Ukrainian presidential race, for instance, was the basis for challenging the legitimacy of that election. In testimony before the U.S. House Committee on International Relations, this discrepancy was cited as the major indicator that the Ukrainian election had been stolen.

In many democracies, elections are conducted with paper ballots and counted by hand under public supervision; computers are not trusted with the process. Not so in this country. The GOP's endorsement of computerized voting without paper trails is highly suspect, as is the privatization of the vote-count process (to companies with Republican CEOs). Add in various forms of voter disenfranchisement and you have a real problem with legitimacy.

Susan L. Olsen
Shoreline, Wash.

Joshua Green replies:

Of course there was "official confirmation" of the 2004 election results. It came when George W. Bush was certified as the winner and John Kerry conceded. The only predetermined conclusion I can spot is your insinuation that the election was somehow stolen by Republicans—a charge for which there is no compelling evidence at all.

ART FOR ART'S SAKE

In reading about the exploits of Michael Mateas and Andrew Stern ("Sex, Lies, and Video Games," November *Atlantic*), I was reminded of a scene from the film version of *Fahrenheit 451*. The fireman's wife, Mrs. Montag, is sitting in front of her room-sized television screen watching a soap opera. Suddenly, the characters turn to her and ask, "What do you think, Mrs. Montag?" What she decides determines how they proceed. François Truffaut (and Ray Bradbury) used this scene to depict the mesmerizing power of video media, which is exerted at the expense of all other forms (especially books) and entraps people with an enveloping technological superiority.

Messrs. Mateas and Stern turn the warning on its head and call it art. But books (or any traditional art form) have one thing that interactivity will never have: a natural respect for the human

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need to experience perspectives different from one's own. Whereas adding one's own point of view to a movie or video game would ultimately only reinforce that point of view. In the end, however clever it may be, it is an act of narcissism, not art.

Andy Voda
Putney, Vt.

THE BLANK SLATE?

I read with interest James Fallows's article "Artificial Intelligentsia" (October *Atlantic*), but I wouldn't be overly sanguine about the idea that easy access to facts and categorizing aids will improve our thinking. This argument rests on the assumption that the mind is a kind of blackboard: Put more and better-organized information on the board, and thinking will be easier.

But research tells us that the analogy is probably inaccurate. The brain is a network that functions through the establishment, growth, and pruning of neuronal connections; it is these shifting electrochemical patterns that constitute thought. Furthermore, all mental activity has the potential to alter the structure of the brain itself. It is precisely the weight of the innumerable cognitive operations we perform throughout our developing years that creates our adult minds. Memorizing information, while not the most glamorous of cognitive tasks, is nonetheless a part of this architectural process. Less memorization means less thinking. Organizing and categorizing information—shifting across the borders of perception, memory, and reason in the process—would seem to possess even more sculpting power. This is why our blackboard analogy, where the mind is the blackboard and information is the writing, is false. No meaningful distinction can be made between the contents of our thoughts and our mind. Thinking *is* the mind. And to cede portions of our cognitive kingdom to computers for the sake of convenience seems unwise.

None of this means that mental aids such as dictionaries and encyclopedias should be avoided. And, as Fallows suggested, perhaps their electronic counterparts will lead to new ways of creating and knowing. But, as Goethe said, "First master the rules, then discard them." Young minds especially need to exercise all of their mental muscles in a comprehensive and disciplined way before being given all the answers by a blinking screen.

Dean Williams
Kyoto, Japan

THE USES OF TERROR

It's puzzling that the media scratch their collective head every time yet another U.S. agency gets caught funding, training, transporting, protecting, or generally babysitting terrorists ("Twilight of the Assassins," November *Atlantic*). It's naive to believe our politicians' rhetoric that terrorism is the new Nazism and thus anathema

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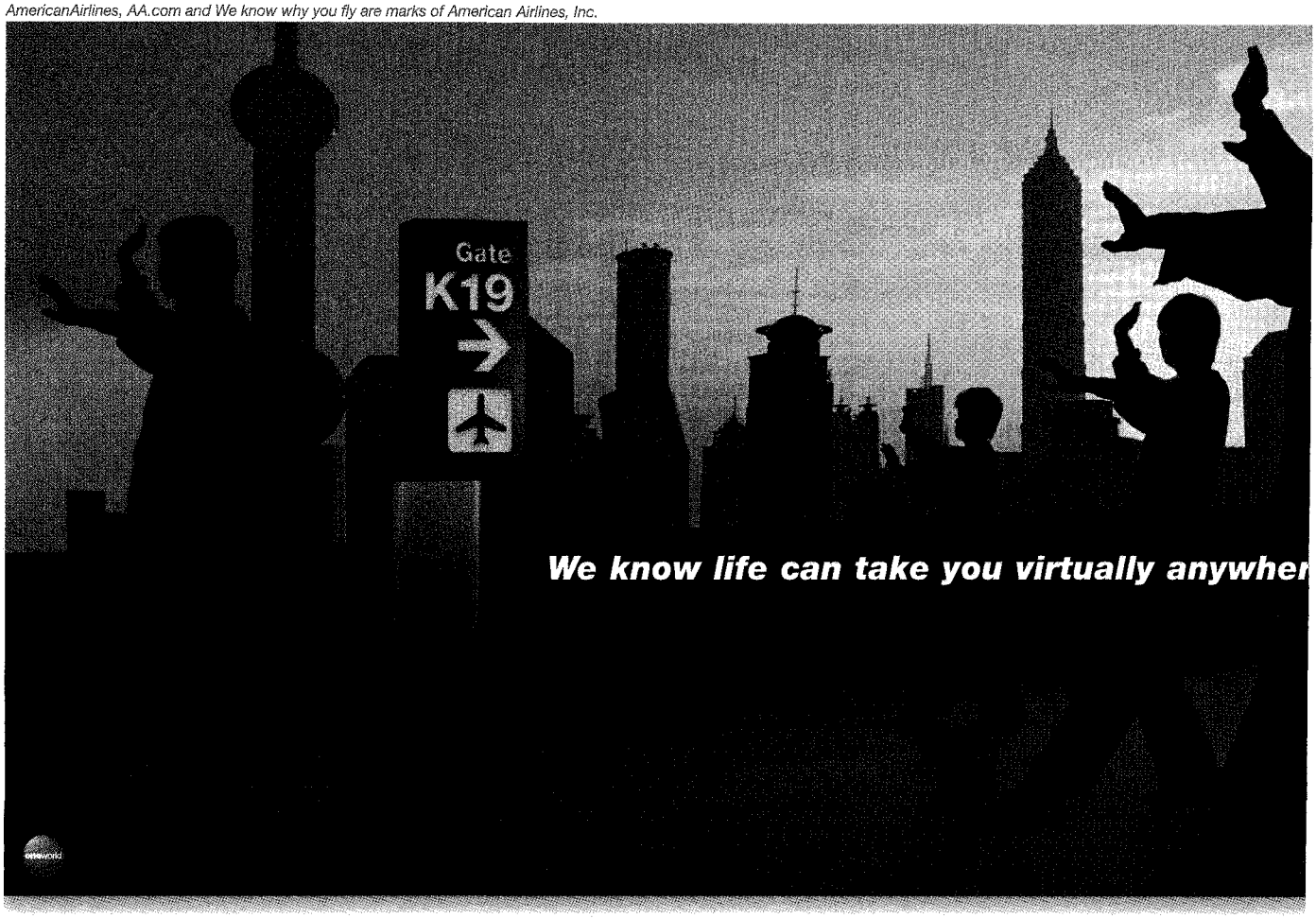

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to our government. For decades, what we now term "terrorism" has been just another instrument in the realpolitik toolbox, openly discussed (albeit behind closed doors) and repeatedly implemented by people at the highest level of the national-security community. The fact that the protection of Luis Posada and Orlando Bosch has continued under both Democratic and Republican control of the White House and Congress reflects the simple fact that the government's military, intelligence, and law-enforcement organs maintain their personnel for decades. Despite the imprisonments and firings of a few fall guys, the players remain the same throughout the years.

People like Posada and Bosch are allowed to remain at large because they are useful to this "black ops" cadre. Cuba's own use of Posada as a poster boy for U.S.-backed terrorism only shows that Fidel Castro's government is just as cynical as ours. With Posada on the loose, *we* can use him to kill; *they* can use him to propagandize; everybody wins. Everybody, that is, except the citizens of both countries whose trust in their own government leaves them dead—collateral damage in the big chess game.

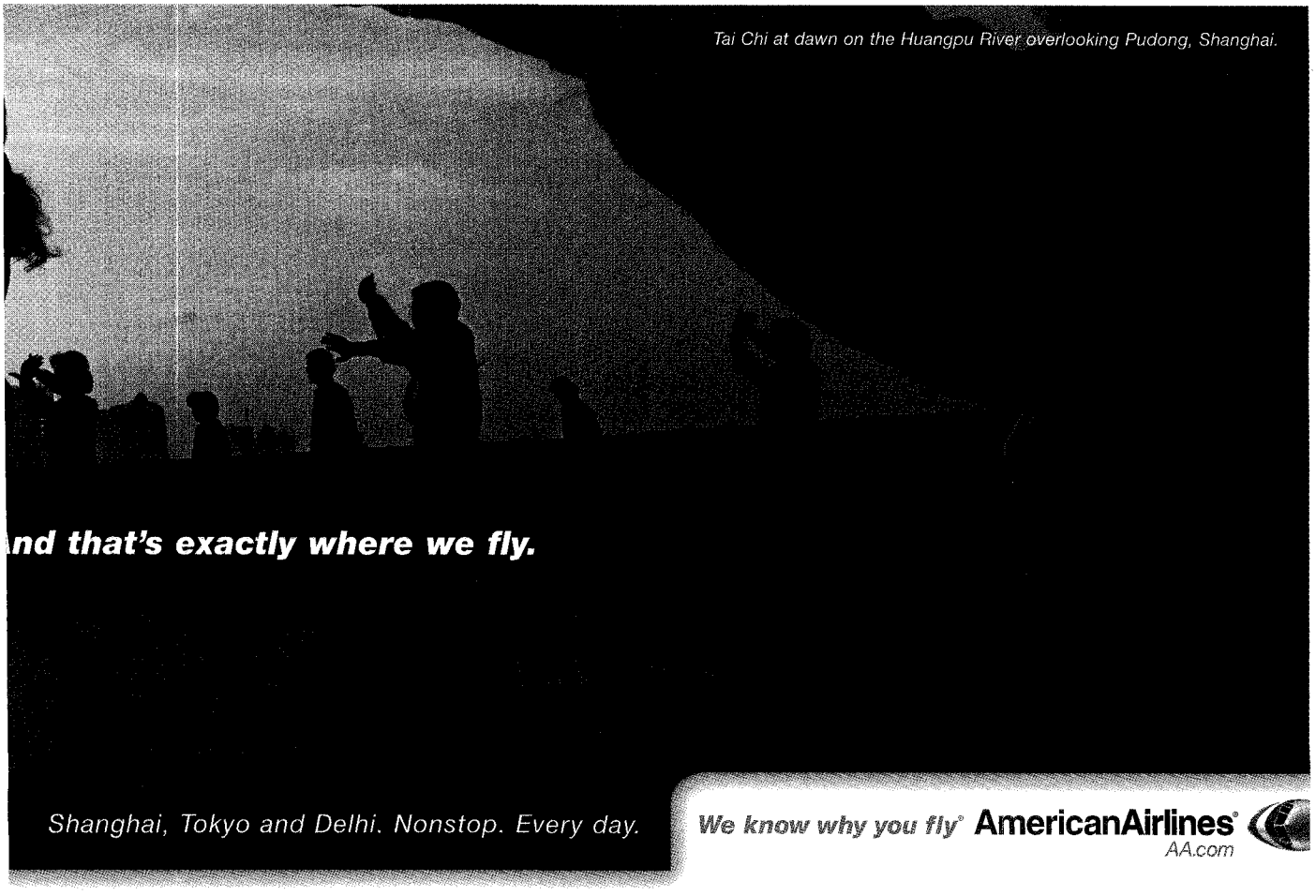
Glen Hochkeppel
Ashburn, Va.

THE SPACE BETWEEN

Barbara Wallraff speculates (Word Court, October *Atlantic*) that printers who set type by hand commonly used an extra space after sentence-ending periods because inserting space there saved the work of spacing more evenly elsewhere. I learned to set type both by hand and by machine at South Dakota State University's Printing and Rural Journalism school during the summer of 1953. We were taught to use *less* space after periods than elsewhere because aesthetically the period (and the comma) already gives the illusion of extra white space. Lazy printers may have inserted extra space after sentence-ending periods, but conscientious printers did not. In my opinion, the practice of inserting two spaces between sentences ignores aesthetics and arose with stenography, not with printing. I've seen the two-space instruction in various typewriting and secretarial manuals.

John Bowers
Bend, Ore.

Barbara Wallraff replies:
What I wrote wasn't exactly speculation. It's an easily verified fact that extra space appears between sentences in many books published in the early twentieth century. As for the reason for the space, before publishing my theory, I ran it by the curator of a museum of the history of printing, who said it sounded good to him. But I'm grateful for John Bowers's information. And I second his opinion that one space between sentences just plain looks better than two.



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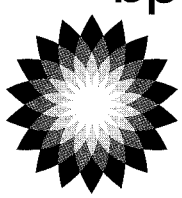

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THE AGENDA

BROOKS KRAFT/CORBIS

COMMENT

Bush is fading. Bush Republicanism is here to stay.

It's His Party

BY ROSS DOUTHAT

It's become fashionable to draw comparisons between George W. Bush's sins and those of Richard Nixon, and for good reason. Both presidents are likely to be remembered as polarizing figures who left the country more divided than they found it. Both were accused of wartime deceptions; both also lost their way in disastrous second terms. And both men's blunders, as Jonathan Rauch argued in this space last fall ("Unwinding Bush," October), are the sort that could take decades to undo.

Bush may resemble his disgraced predecessor in another way as well. When Nixon left office, his attempt to create a conservative majority by drawing blue-collar voters into the GOP through appeals to patriotism and law-and-order seemed to have been killed off by Watergate. As it turned out, however, the working-class conservatism he summoned up has continued to dominate American politics, shaping the campaigns of Ronald Reagan and the second Bush himself.

Since the Republicans' stinging defeat in the 2006 midterm elections, Bush's distinctive ideological cocktail—social conservatism and an accommodation with big government at home, and a moralistic interventionism abroad—has similarly been derided by many as political poison. The various ingredients of "Bushism," it's been argued, have alienated fiscal hawks and foreign-policy realists, Catholics and libertarians—in short, everyone but the party's evangelical base.

But someone must have forgotten to tell the GOP presidential field. If you consider how the nation's most ambitious Republicans are positioning themselves for 2008, Bushism looks like it could have surprising staying power.

All of the prominent candidates, for instance, champion fiscal restraint, but none are likely to revive the small-government conservatism that Bush deliberately abandoned. John McCain may be a vehement foe of pork, but on issues ranging from campaign finance to education, he has shown little aversion to expanding the scope of federal power. Mitt Romney is best known for having delivered universal health care to Massachusetts, the bluest state in the union. And Sam Brownback has supported nearly every one of Bush's big-government gambits, from the faith-based initiative to the costly prescription-drug entitlement. Newt Gingrich might

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seem a plausible advocate for small government—except that his recent manifesto, *Winning the Future*, includes more spending proposals than specific budget cuts.

The Bush-imitating pattern also holds in foreign policy. McCain talks tougher than Bush about Iran; Gingrich waxes eloquent about a third world war; Rudy Giuliani takes a maximalist view of the war on terrorism, casting it as a decades-long struggle that dates to Munich in 1972. Save for Brownback, all of the major contenders backed Bush's call for a "surge" of troops into Iraq—and Brownback has been more aggressive and moralistic than Bush on humanitarian issues like Darfur.

And although Brownback is the only candidate in the field so far with Bush's personal connection to the party's religious conservatives, everyone—even McCain, even Giuliani—is actively courting them. This is partly because without evangelical Christians, there would essentially *be* no Republican Party anymore: Evangelicals provided more votes to the Republicans in last year's midterms than African Americans and union members combined gave to the Democrats. Their influence within the party more or less requires that primary candidates endorse Bush-style moralism, not only on gay marriage and abortion but in foreign policy as well—which means continued support for Israel, a continued drift toward confrontation with Iran, and further ventures in conservative humanitarianism, along the lines of Bush's AIDS-in-Africa initiative.

But the Republican candidates have another reason for giving Bushism a second act: It has more potential to appeal to the broad electorate than other visions of where the GOP should go from here. The enduring popularity of the welfare state makes big-government conservatism far more palatable to voters than the government-cutting purism that Bush's right-wing critics hope to revive. (In the long run, the country may be forced to choose between keeping spending high and keeping taxes low; in the short term, though, the deficits Bush has run up are not the public's first priority.) Similarly, although the Iraq War is likely to be an albatross for the Republican Party for years to come, the rest of Bush's national-security vision—from opposing Iran to pushing domestic measures like the PATRIOT Act—could still command widespread support.

On "values" issues, the picture is more complicated. There's no question that the GOP alienated moderate voters in episodes such as the Terri Schiavo case. On the other hand, opposition to gay marriage and abortion are usually political winners for the Republicans (although this could change as tolerance for homosexuality spreads, or if *Roe v. Wade* is overturned). And the GOP benefits significantly from being cast as the party of religious faith. Despite six years of liberal panic over the specter of a U.S. theocracy, only 29 percent of the public thinks that religion has too much influence in American politics, and almost 80 percent believes that the courts have gone too far in purging religion from the public square. Keeping the party's socially conservative base happy without losing the country's religious middle is a challenge, but Bush met it successfully across three election cycles.

It's those elections, ultimately, that are the most important reason Bushism is likely to endure, at least as a pole star for Republican strategy: the strong showing in 2000, when nearly every economic indicator suggested a landslide for Al Gore; the sweeping win in 2002—an off-year election, when the sitting president's party historically loses seats; and the victory over John Kerry in 2004, despite plummeting public support for the Iraq War. While journalists and historians debate where Bush went wrong, Republicans are likely to spend the next decade trying to imitate his successes.

While historians debate where Bush went wrong, Republicans are likely to spend the next decade trying to imitate his successes.

It's possible, of course, that the deep unpopularity of the Iraq War could drag the rest of Bushism down with it, as could the fiscal mess created by the administration's tax cuts. But predictions of the conservative majority's demise are premature. Bush-style conservatism probably won't create a thirty-year Republican realignment, as Karl Rove once hoped, but it has the potential to at least keep the GOP politically competitive.

The perpetuation of Bushism would likely mean that some of today's most acrimonious debates will persist—the culture-war shouting matches, for instance, or the growing "Who lost Iraq?" controversy. And it would probably mean that neither party will grapple seriously with the country's fiscal imbalance, at least until the entitlement crunch puts their backs against the wall.

But a continuation of Bushism might also create areas of bipartisan consensus. For instance, evangelicals and liberal internationalists might come together on the use of force for humanitarian ends overseas. Big-government conservatives and populist liberals might agree on the need to address the financial insecurity of working-class families. Indeed, as in the Nixon era, it's possible that what has made the last six years so polarizing isn't the president's ideology but the president himself—his tongue-tied speeches and lack of interest in policy detail, his mix of incompetence and abrasive self-assurance, his cronyism and disdain for compromise. Once Bush has been ushered offstage, a Republican Party fashioned in his image could actually help unite the country, as Bush-the-candidate famously promised to do, rather than divide it.

Ross Douthat is an *Atlantic* associate editor and the author of *Privilege: Harvard and the Education of the Ruling Class* (2005).

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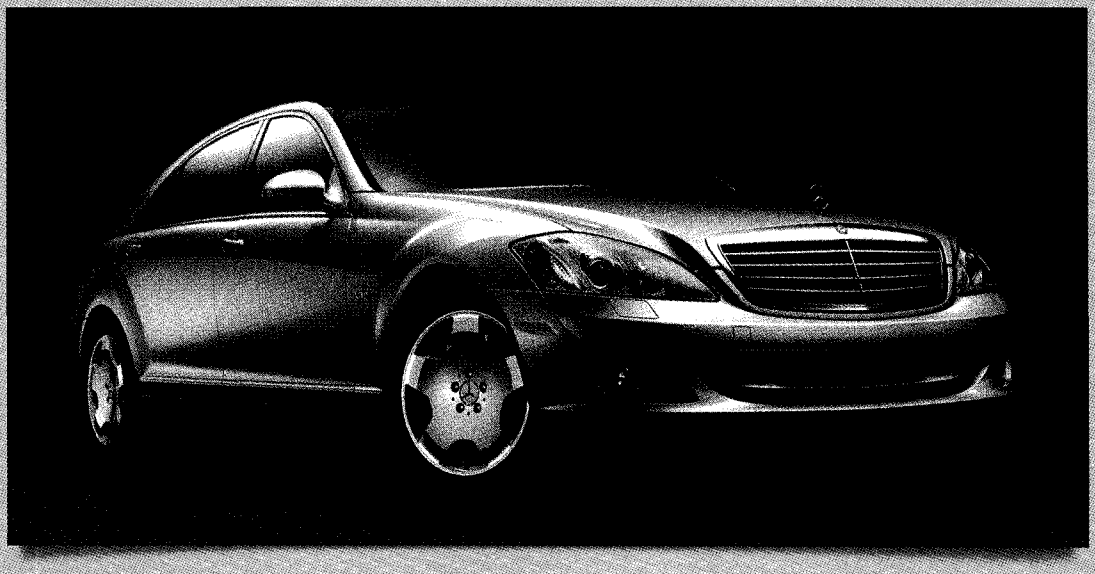

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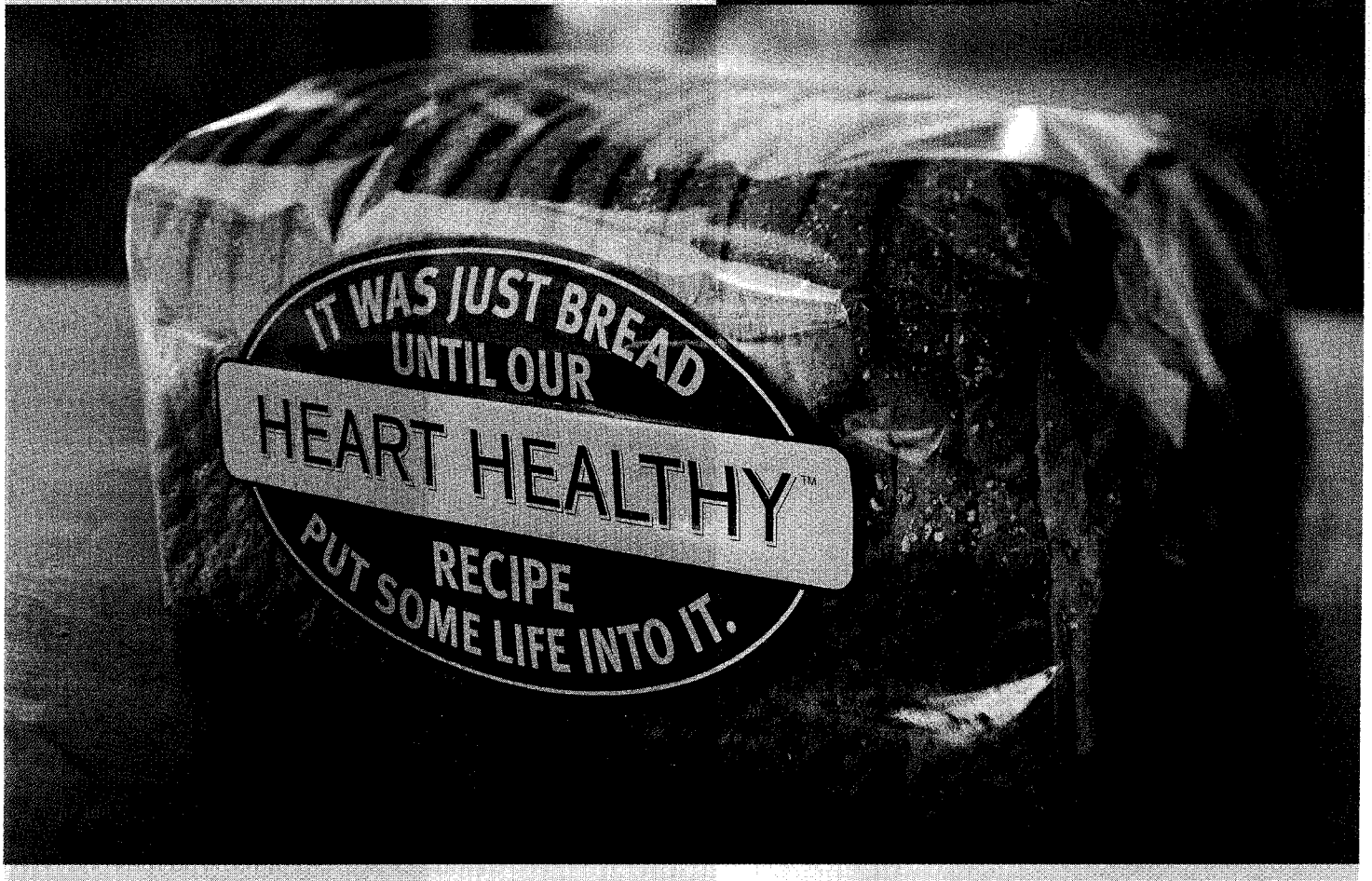

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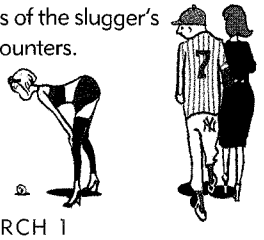
CALENDAR WHAT TO WATCH FOR IN THE WEEKS AHEAD

COMPILED BY MATTHEW QUIRK

MARCH 1
Pulp Fiction
HarperCollins, whose ReganBooks imprint had planned to publish O.J. Simpson's 'hypothetical' confession until public anger halted it, invites another drubbing with today's publication of a "reality fiction" book about Mickey Mantle. The imagined "firsthand" account of his life is packed with lurid—and dubious—tales of the slugger's encounters.

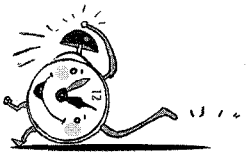


MARCH 1
Passing Storm
Some 35,000 victims of Hurricane Katrina may have to fend for themselves today, after FEMA stops providing rental assistance.

MARCH 4
Baltic Ballots
Web-obsessed Estonians—who knew?—conduct the world's first online national parliamentary election today. Citizens equipped with smart-card readers and a Web connection can cast ballots using the computer chip in their national ID cards.

MARCH 5
Conrad Bilk?
Conrad Black, the smug Canadian press baron-cum-British lord, stands trial today along with several of his former executives for allegedly bilking his publishing empire of more than $80 million to finance his jet-setting lifestyle. He could face up to ninety-five years in prison.

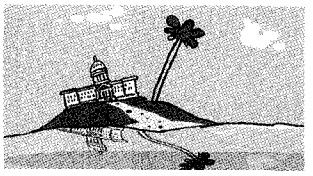
MARCH 6
Late Bloomer
Long mocked as "the most expensive album never made," Guns N' Roses's *Chinese Democracy* should finally get a spin today. Thirteen years and $13 million in the making, the project burned through at least four producers, featured a rap cameo by Shaquille O'Neal, and included an in-studio chicken coop built to appease a finicky guitarist, all presided over by the group's tempestuous lead singer—and lone remaining original member—Axl Rose.



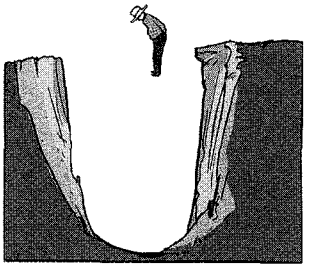
MARCH 11
Spring Forward, Faster
Daylight saving time begins three weeks earlier this year in an effort to save energy. Clocks "spring forward" by an hour today and don't "fall back" until the first Sunday in November (a week later than in the past).

MARCH 13
Mama Mia!
Silvio Berlusconi faces charges today that he paid a British lawyer $600,000 to lie on his behalf during earlier trials for corruption. The oft-targeted former Italian prime minister, aka "Il Cavaliere," has thus far managed to avoid conviction in his many brushes with the law.

MARCH 19–23
Legislators Gone Wild
Stop the presses! The Senate, like the rest of the non-undergraduate universe, will work this week, sacrificing what in recent years has been a spring break. As part of a plan by the new Democratic majority to create the impression of frenzied hard work, the House has also boosted its workweek from a bankerly three days to five, and the Senate has trimmed its *other* spring break—two weeks in April—by half.



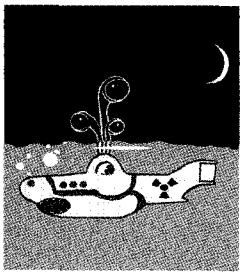
MARCH 25
Middle Passage Remembered
On the bicentenary of its abolition of the slave trade, Britain treads a careful line: An official "statement of regret" may be in the offing for today. Last year, Tony Blair went further than any Western head of state by expressing "deep sorrow" for his country's actions, but Britain (like other nations, including the United States) has stopped shy of a formal apology to avoid widespread calls for reparations.



MARCH 28
Walking on Air
Backed by a Las Vegas businessman, the Hualapai Indians open a glass walkway cantilevered seventy feet past the edge of the Grand Canyon and thousands of feet over its floor to drum up more tourism (it's been years since Robbie Knievel's jump). The U-shaped structure is fitted with shock absorbers to minimize swaying.

MARCH 31
Where Have You Gone, Jackie Robinson?
As part of Major League Baseball's effort to check the dwindling number of black players, the World Series–champion St. Louis Cardinals play the Cleveland Indians today in the inaugural Civil Rights Game, intended to spur young black athletes' interest in the game.

ALSO THIS MONTH:
Drop Your Weapons?
Britain, which could be within striking distance of a nuclear-powered Middle East, votes this month on whether to replace its only nuclear deterrents—four aging nuclear-armed submarines—at a cost of up to $40 billion.



Breaking Up the Balkans
The status of Kosovo, under UN control as part of Serbia since the late 1990s, should be resolved this month. The province is expected to gain autonomy from Serbia, though the term *independence* may be avoided in the final settlement to appease Serbia and others.

Cult-de-sac
Shoko Asahara, the near-blind Japanese cult leader who masterminded the 1995 sarin attack on the Tokyo subway, hangs this month for killing twenty-seven people and injuring about 5,000 more in a string of nerve gassings and other attacks.

ISTVAN BANYAI

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THE WORLD IN NUMBERS

The disintegration of a Baghdad neighborhood

No Forwarding Address

BY ILANA OZERNOY WITH ALI HAMDANI

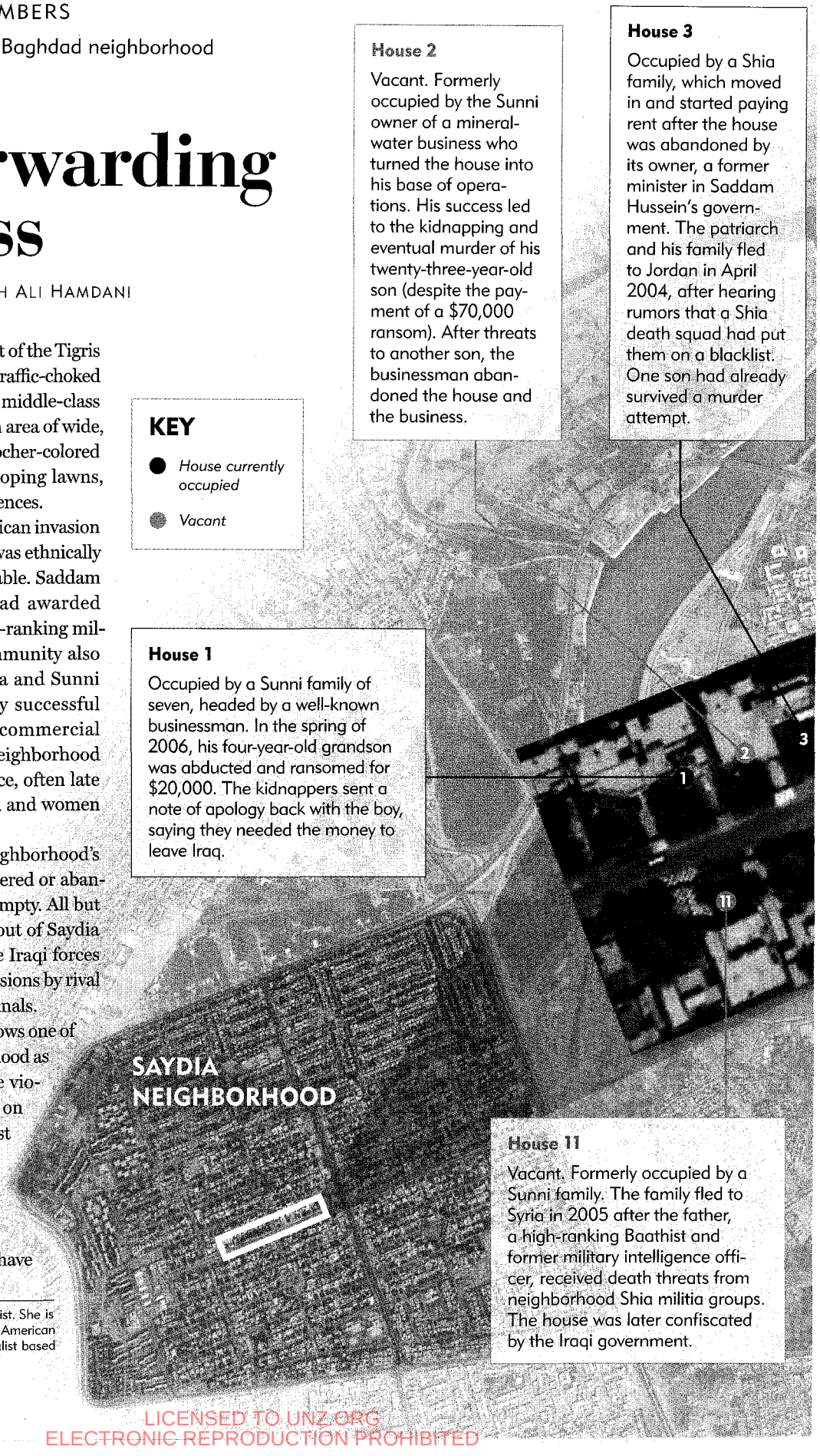
In southern Baghdad, west of the Tigris River and away from the traffic-choked heart of the capital, lies the middle-class neighborhood of Saydia, an area of wide, palm-shaded avenues and ocher-colored villas—some fronted by sloping lawns, others hidden behind tall fences.

At the time of the American invasion of Iraq, the neighborhood was ethnically mixed and relatively desirable. Saddam Hussein's government had awarded some of the houses to high-ranking military officers, but the community also included nonmilitary Shia and Sunni families, often headed by successful entrepreneurs. A lively commercial drag sliced through the neighborhood and offered a meeting place, often late into the night, for the men and women who lived there.

Today many of the neighborhood's homes and shops are shuttered or abandoned, and its streets are empty. All but one of the roads into and out of Saydia have been sealed off by the Iraqi forces in an attempt to stem incursions by rival militias and common criminals.

The map to the right shows one of the streets in this neighborhood as of late 2006, detailing the violence that has been visited on its households over the past two years. A significant proportion of the families that lived here at the time of Saddam Hussein's fall have fled; at least seven have left Iraq altogether.

Ilana Ozernoy is a freelance journalist. She is working on a book about war and the American home front. Ali Hamdani is a journalist based in Baghdad.



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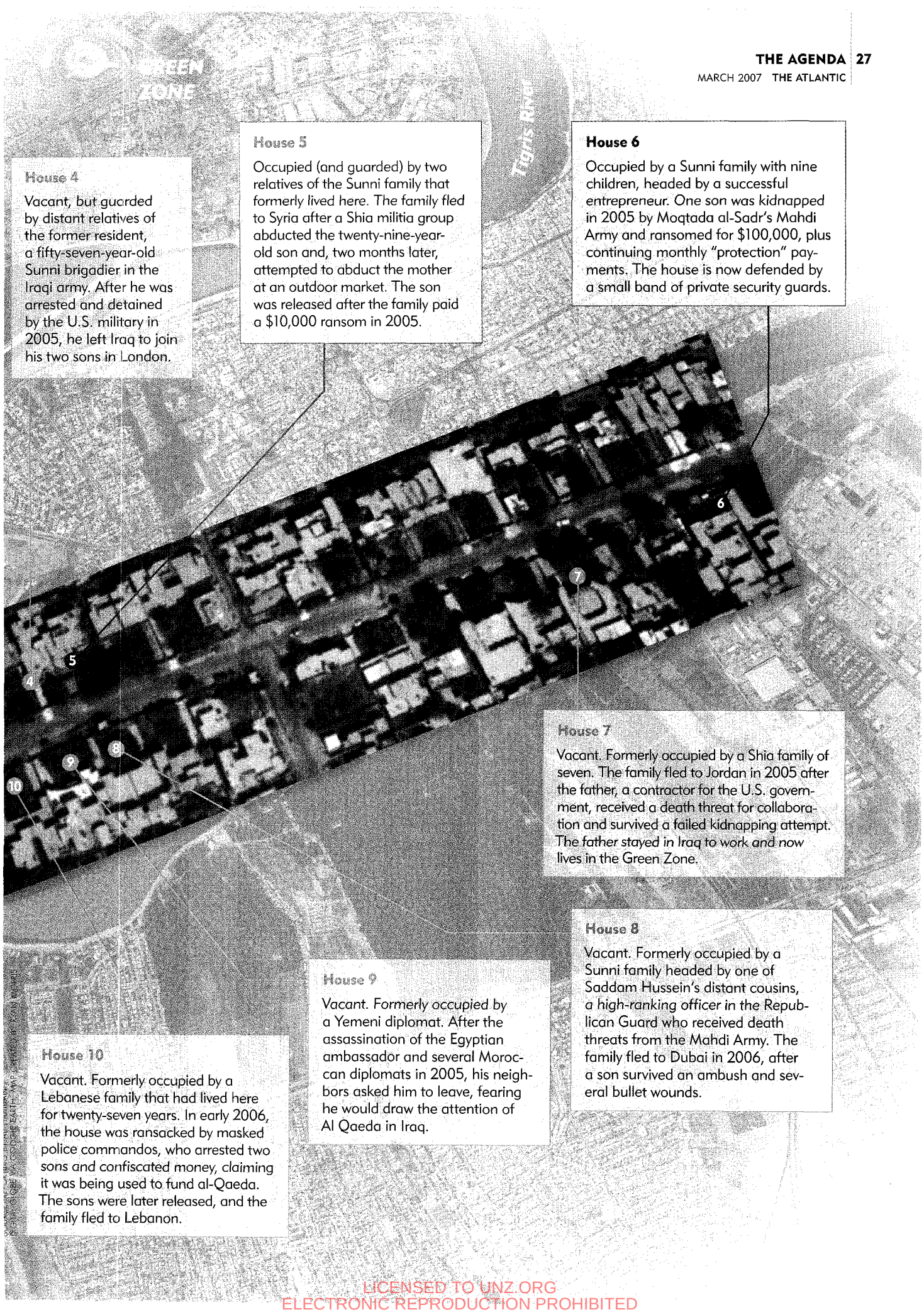

House 4

Vacant, but guarded by distant relatives of the former resident, a fifty-seven-year-old Sunni brigadier in the Iraqi army. After he was arrested and detained by the U.S. military in 2005, he left Iraq to join his two sons in London.

House 5

Occupied (and guarded) by two relatives of the Sunni family that formerly lived here. The family fled to Syria after a Shia militia group abducted the twenty-nine-year-old son and, two months later, attempted to abduct the mother at an outdoor market. The son was released after the family paid a $10,000 ransom in 2005.

House 6

Occupied by a Sunni family with nine children, headed by a successful entrepreneur. One son was kidnapped in 2005 by Moqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army and ransomed for $100,000, plus continuing monthly "protection" payments. The house is now defended by a small band of private security guards.

House 7

Vacant. Formerly occupied by a Shia family of seven. The family fled to Jordan in 2005 after the father, a contractor for the U.S. government, received a death threat for collaboration and survived a failed kidnapping attempt. The father stayed in Iraq to work and now lives in the Green Zone.

House 8

Vacant. Formerly occupied by a Sunni family headed by one of Saddam Hussein's distant cousins, a high-ranking officer in the Republican Guard who received death threats from the Mahdi Army. The family fled to Dubai in 2006, after a son survived an ambush and several bullet wounds.

House 9

Vacant. Formerly occupied by a Yemeni diplomat. After the assassination of the Egyptian ambassador and several Moroccan diplomats in 2005, his neighbors asked him to leave, fearing he would draw the attention of Al Qaeda in Iraq.

House 10

Vacant. Formerly occupied by a Lebanese family that had lived here for twenty-seven years. In early 2006, the house was ransacked by masked police commandos, who arrested two sons and confiscated money, claiming it was being used to fund al-Qaeda. The sons were later released, and the family fled to Lebanon.

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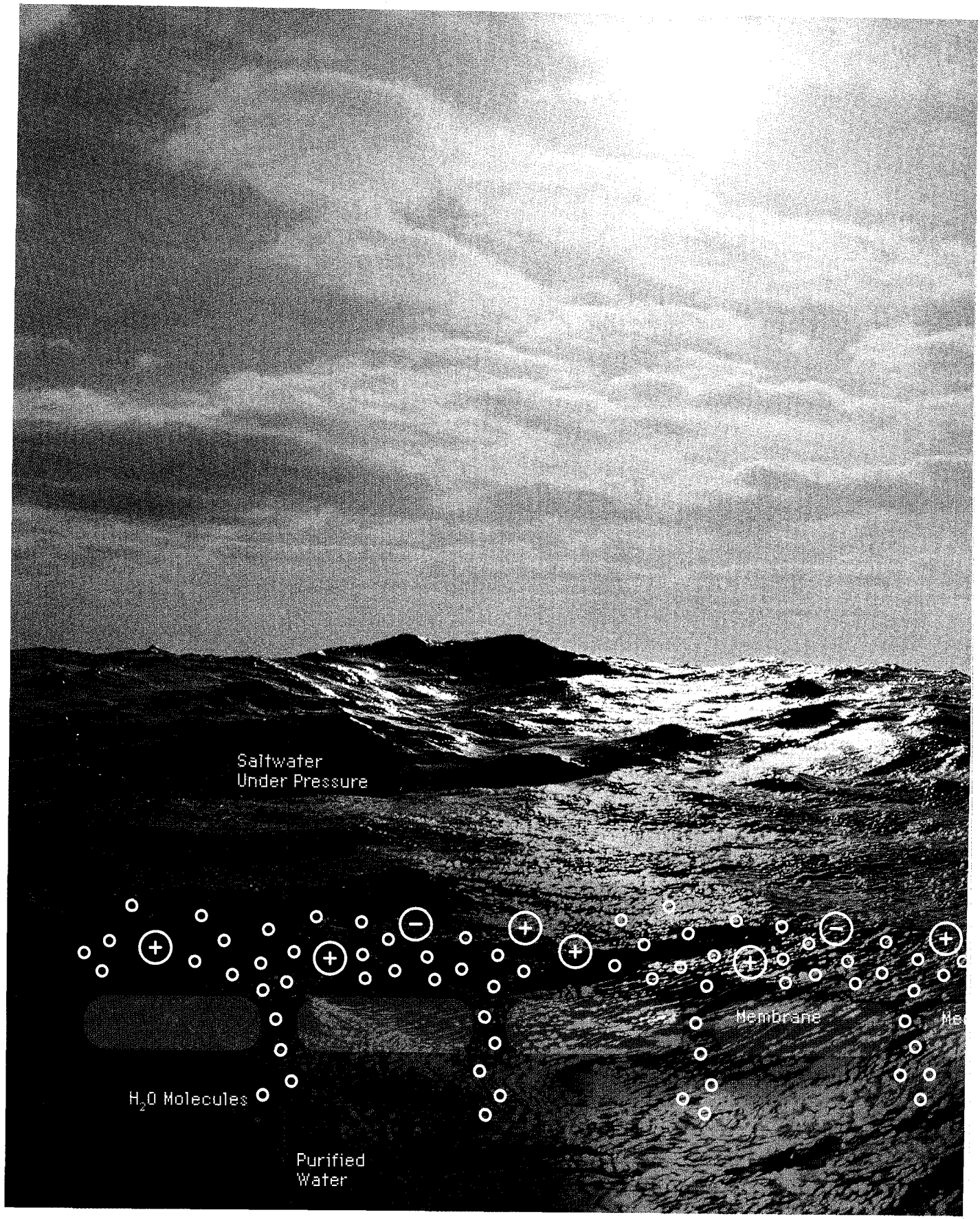

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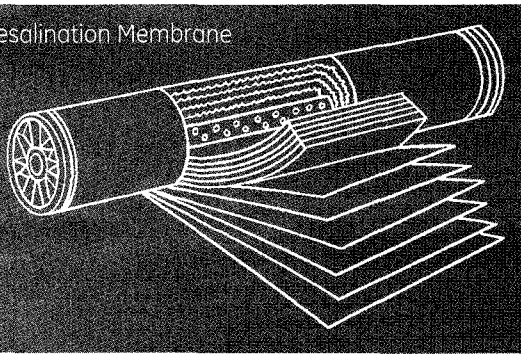

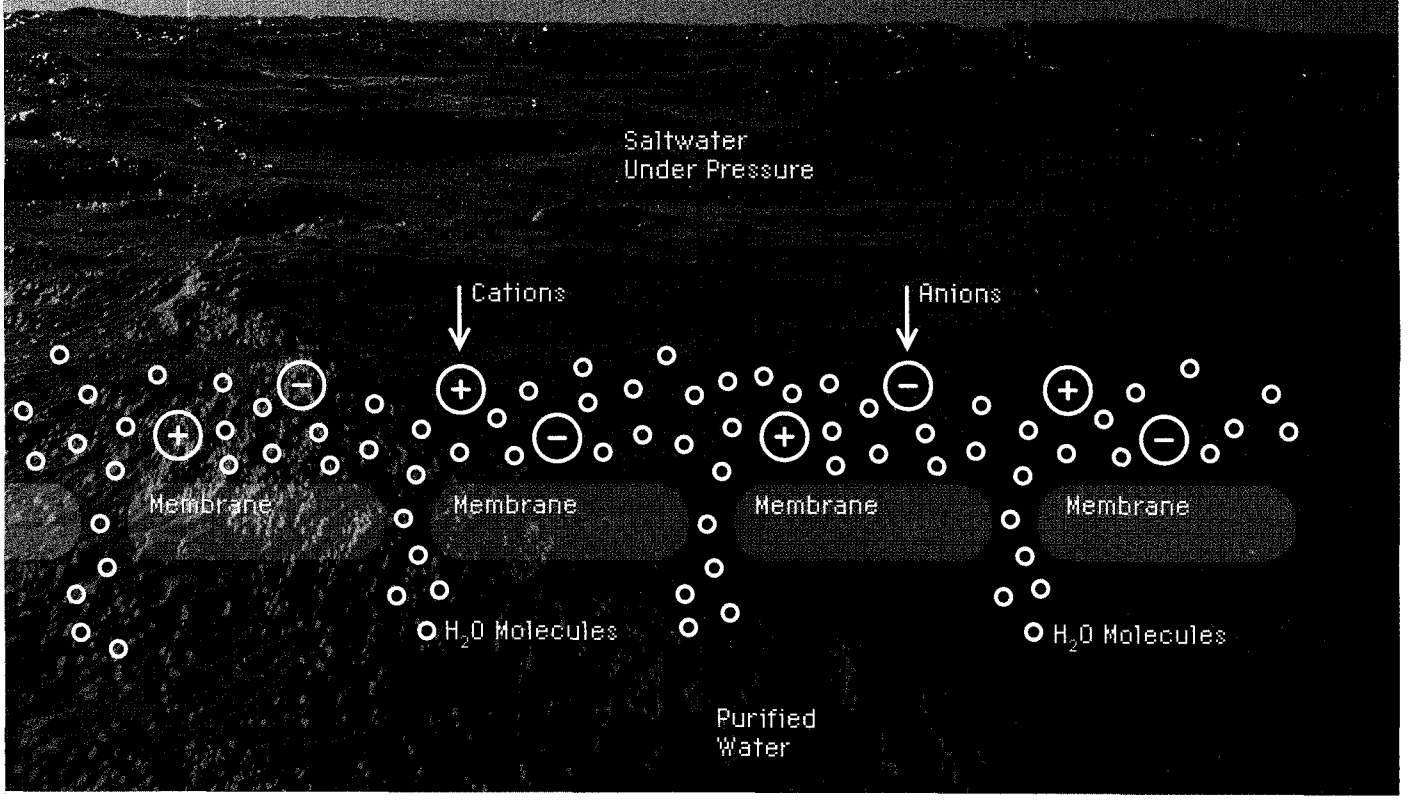

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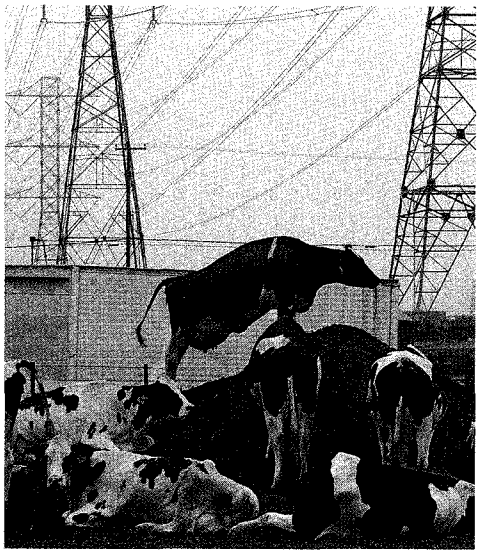
PRIMARY SOURCES

ECOLOGY

The Bovine Menace

Forget SUVs and tractor-trailers—the world's livestock play a larger role in global warming than all of our planes, trains, and automobiles combined, according to a report from the Livestock, Environment and Development Initiative (LEAD), an organization that promotes "ecologically sustainable livestock production systems." Between the deforestation that's necessary to create grazing lands, the fossil fuels required to manufacture fertilizer for the crops that feed the world's growing livestock population, and the gases released by animal manure (and yes, animal flatulence as well), livestock are responsible for 18 percent of greenhouse-gas emissions worldwide. The good news: There are ways to reduce these emissions, including more efficient feed production, improved soil conservation, and a better diet for all those gassy cows. Given that the global production of meat and milk is on track to double by 2050, livestock's current environmental impact would need to be cut in half just to stay within the present level of damage to the global ecosystem.

—"Livestock's Long Shadow," Livestock, Environment and Development Initiative, H. Steinfeld et al.



AN INCONVENIENT TROUGH: Livestock generate 18 percent of greenhouse gases.

THE WORKFORCE

A Zero-Sum Game?

Between 1960 and 2000, the employment rate for black men plunged from 90 percent to 76 percent; for "low-skilled" black men (defined as high-school dropouts), in particular, it fell from 89 percent to just 56 percent. Between 1980 and 2000, meanwhile, the incarceration rate for black men rose from just 1 percent to nearly 10 percent. A new study considers this shift in light of large-scale immigration, which may have crowded black men out of the labor market and made a shift to crime more appealing. The researchers found that as immigration increased the supply of workers at a particular education level, the employment rate for black men in that category declined, and the incarceration rate rose. From 1980 to 2000, the authors conclude, immigration accounted for roughly a third of the decline in the black employment rate, and about 10 percent of the increase in the incarceration rate for low-skilled African Americans.

—"Immigration and African-American Employment Opportunities," George J. Borjas, Jeffrey Grogger, and Gordon H. Hanson, National Bureau of Economic Research

PUBLIC HEALTH

Reverse Psychology

Does antismoking advertising work? Not if it's funded by tobacco companies, argues a new study that examines three such ad campaigns. The authors found that, on average, each additional youth-targeted prevention ad that a young person saw was associated with a 3 percent stronger intention to smoke at some point in the future. Exposure to prevention ads targeted at parents, meanwhile—like the Philip Morris campaign urging parents to "Talk. They'll Listen."—made older teens less likely to perceive smoking as harmful, more likely to approve of smoking, and more likely to plan to smoke in the future. In these ads, the authors note, "no reason beyond simply being a teenager is offered" to explain why kids shouldn't smoke, which dovetails with Philip Morris's stated aim of delaying smoking, not preventing it.

—"Effect of Televised, Tobacco Company-Funded Smoking Prevention Advertising on Youth Smoking-Related Beliefs, Intentions, and Behavior," Melanie Wakefield et al., American Journal of Public Health

CONSUMPTION

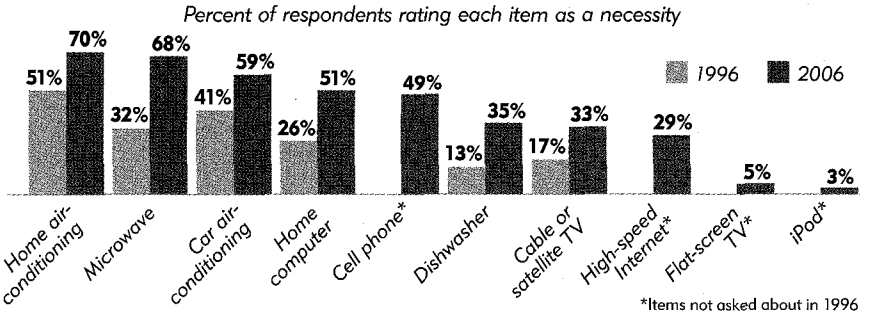
Needful Things

The list of consumer goods that Americans claim they can't live without just keeps getting longer, according to a new survey from the Pew Research Center, which tracks the percentage of Americans who rated various items as "necessities" in 1996 versus 2006. Some of the newly necessary products on the '06 list weren't even on the radar a decade before—high-speed Internet access, for instance, which 29 percent of respondents now can't live without. But other items that made a leap toward widespread indispensability have been on the market for years or decades—dishwashers, for example, as well as microwaves, clothes dryers, and cable television. Manufacturers and advertisers can rest assured that once we start needing something, we never stop: The report notes that across the products surveyed, "wherever there has been a significant change ... in the public's judgment about these items, it's always been in the direction of necessity."

—"Luxury or Necessity?" Pew Research Center

What Americans Need: 1996–2006

Percent of respondents rating each item as a necessity



*Items not asked about in 1996

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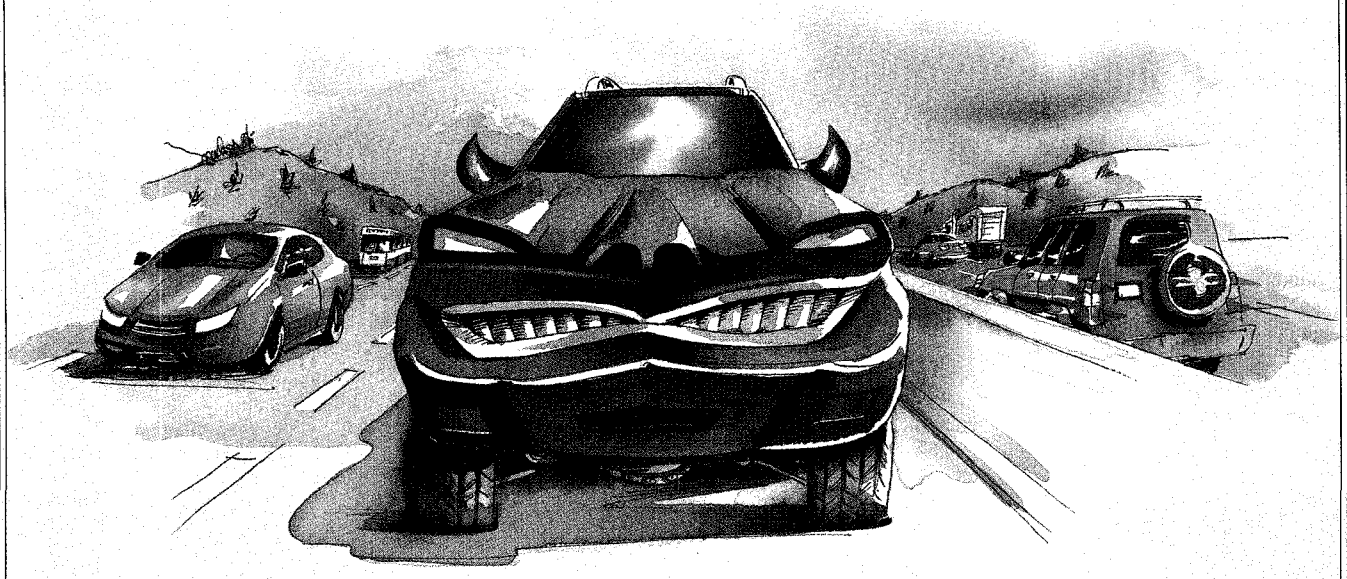
The #1 killer of teenagers *doesn't have a trigger.*

IT HAS A STEERING WHEEL.



Motor vehicle crashes are the #1 cause of death for teens in America. They take nearly 6,000 lives and injure another 300,000 every year. Those numbers remain unacceptably high, despite safer cars, better roads and decades of safe-driving programs. We think it's time for a change.

So The Allstate Foundation has developed a new, nationwide program: "Keep the Drive." It mobilizes *teens* to become safe-driving activists by involving them in designing a new safe-driving program. And it uses the power of peer influence to help teens think and act smarter every time they get into a car — as a driver or a passenger.

Peers are some of the most important influences in getting teens to drive more safely. "Keep the Drive" can help them realize that **smart driving is the key to keeping their licenses, their cars, their friends and their futures.**

To learn more about this issue and what you can do to help, go to Allstate.com/community

If you're a parent, you'll also find a link to the **Allstate Parent-Teen Driving Contract.** Use it to help you and your teen set driving limits and make smarter decisions on the road.

It's time to make the world a better place to drive.
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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Price of Stability

The Hashemite kingdom of Jordan is an oasis of relative calm in a chaotic region—and that might turn out to be a bad thing, warns a paper from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. American and European support for the Jordanian government, which is essentially an absolute monarchy under a constitutional veneer, represents "a classic case" of prioritizing strategic interests over political reform. But the repressive nature of Jordan's government could harm the West's strategic interests in the long run, the author argues. Unless some kind of democratic reform takes place, the various problems Jordan faces— "deteriorating conditions on its borders, a lack of tangible economic success, and an extremely unpopular foreign policy" (particularly its friendly relationships with Israel and the United States)—are likely to empower the country's Islamist opposition and weaken the legitimacy of the government.

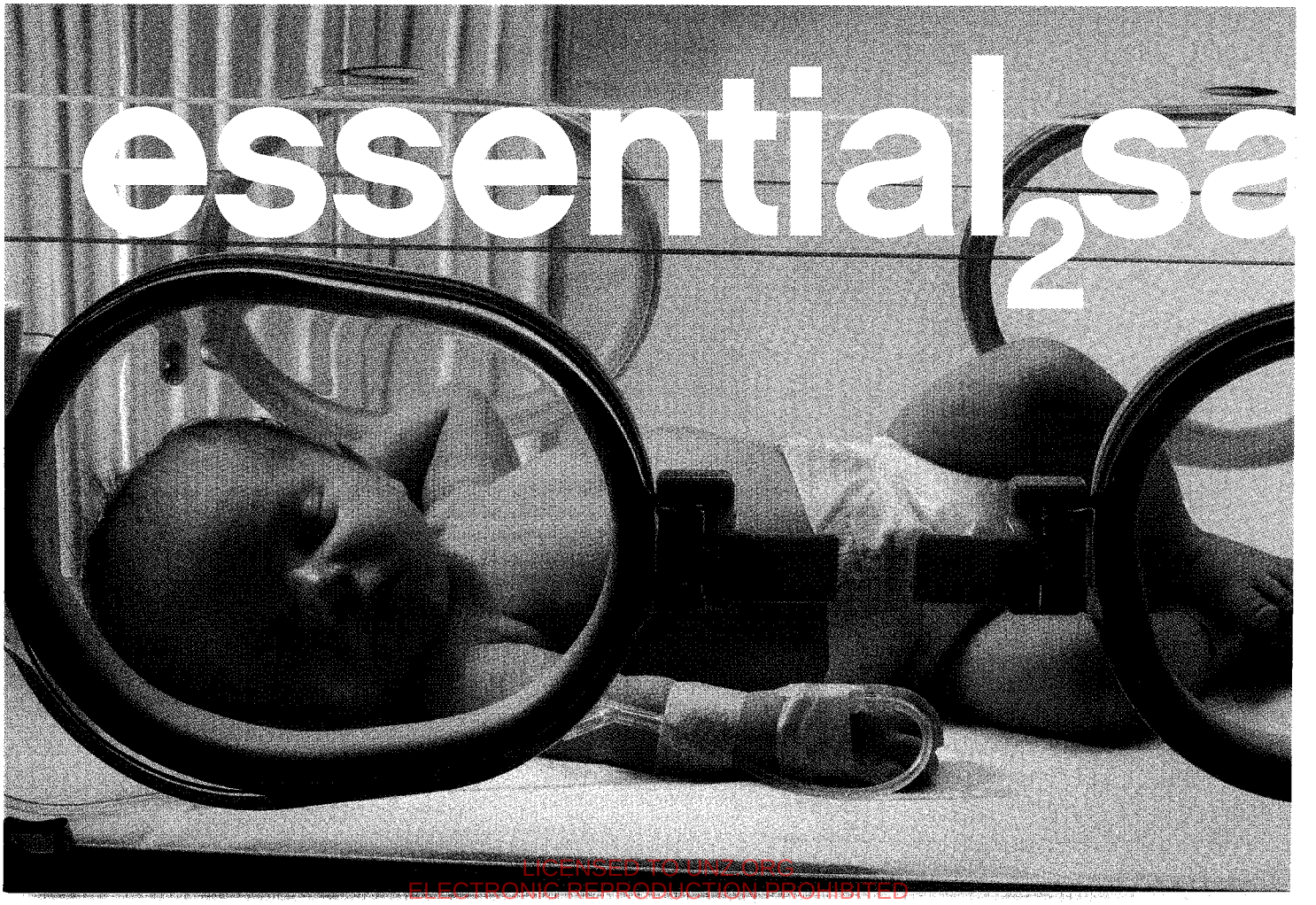
—"Illusive Reform: Jordan's Stubborn Stability," Julia Choucair, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

THE ACADEMY

The Mommy Track

Why do women fall off academia's science track at a faster clip than men? The cause is not innate sex differences, a new study suggests, but neither is it a simple matter of gender discrimination. If a problem exists, the authors conclude, it's about motherhood, not women in general. Using the 1973–2001 Survey of Doctorate Recipients, the study found that while women are less likely than men to enter tenure-track positions in the sciences, the difference is explained completely by "fertility decisions." Single, childless women are between 11 percent (in the life sciences) and 21 percent (in the physical sciences) *more* likely to have a tenure-track job within five years of finishing their doctorate than single, childless men. Marriage and children, however, can give men an advantage. While married scientists of either gender are more likely than single scientists to be on the tenure track within five years, married men are 22 percent more likely than single men, while married women are only 5 percent more likely than single women. And children can hurt a woman's chances significantly: Having a child of prekindergarten age took 8 percentage points off a woman's chances of getting that tenure-track job. Mothers in science who do step onto the tenure track gain tenure and full professorship as quickly as non-mothers. But men always retain the edge: Each child of grade-school age in a male academic's family actually increases by 3 percent the likelihood that the man will receive tenure. (Younger children have no effect on a man's chances for tenure, and men's promotion to full professorship is not affected by children of any age.)

—"Does Science Promote Women? Evidence From Academia 1973–2001," Donna K. Ginther (University of Kansas) and Shulamit Kahn (Boston University)



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CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Revolving Cell Door

Hard time is supposed to be hard. But a new study says harsher prison conditions also make criminals measurably more likely to offend again. The study tracks nearly a thousand people released from federal prisons in 1987. Those whose federal inmate classification scores just barely landed them in low-security (rather than the cushier minimum-security) lockup ended up back in the pokey nearly twice as often as inmates whose scores were slightly lower. The paper's findings cast grave doubt on the value of at least one model of deterrence, which holds that a few years of grim prison conditions will spook criminals back onto the straight and narrow. Whatever the deterrent effects of harsh prison conditions, the authors conclude, they may often be outweighed by the increased criminal propensities of the prisoners subject to them.

—*"Does Prison Harden Inmates?" M. Keith Chen (Yale University) and Jesse M. Shapiro (University of Chicago)*

THE FAMILY

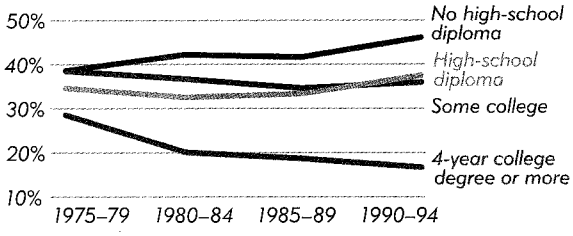
The Divorcing Kind

The divorce rate in America peaked thirty years ago and has declined slightly since—but not for everyone, a study by a sociologist at the University of Maryland points out. A woman's likelihood of divorcing within ten years of her first marriage rose irrespective of her level of education until the mid-1970s. But after that, divorce rates diverged. Twenty-nine percent of women with a four-year college degree who married between 1975 and 1979 divorced within a decade; among college-educated women who married between 1990 and 1994, the within-ten-years divorce rate had fallen to 16.5 percent. Among women with only a high-school diploma, however, the divorce rate remained roughly constant over the same period, and it rose among women without a high-school diploma. This divorce divide, the author suggests, might be both a consequence and a cause of America's growing economic inequality. Economic disadvantages can make divorce more likely, and divorce in turn creates further personal and financial difficulties for parents and children alike, which threaten to "perpetuate inequality across generations."

—*"Trends in Marital Dissolution by Women's Education in the United States," Steven P. Martin,* Demographic Research

Splitting Up

Divorce rates among women, by level of education



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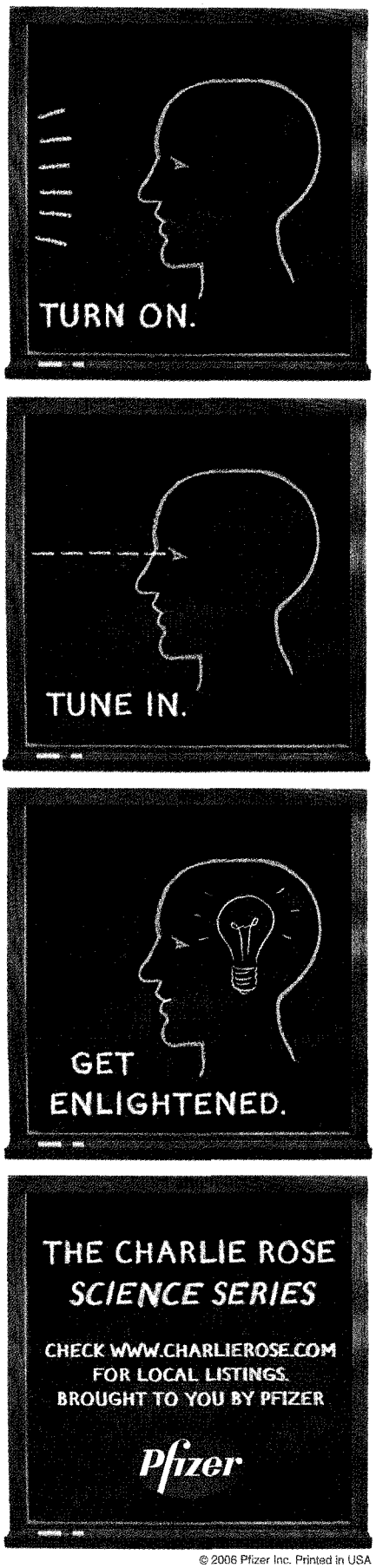

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POVERTY

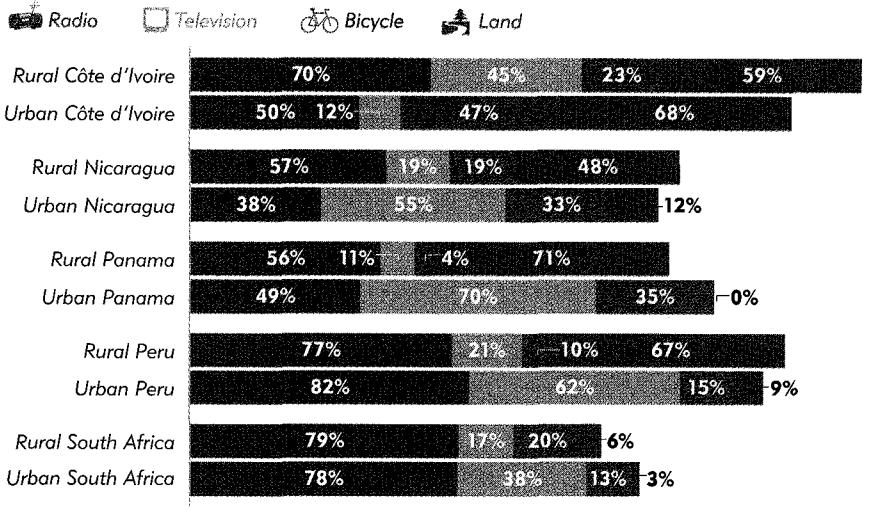
Life on Two Dollars a Day

How do the world's poorest citizens get by on less than $2 a day? A new paper examining the poor in Asia, Africa, and South America finds the expected litany of privations, along with a few surprises. Despite variance in living conditions—only 2 out of 100 poor rural Tanzanians had electricity, for example, but only 1 out of 100 equally poor rural Mexicans lacked electricity—poor people around the world reported high rates of sickness and infirmity and low rates of access to the financial infrastructure (formal loans, insurance, savings accounts) that might give them a firmer economic foothold. For the most part lacking steady employment, the poor were found to be remarkably entrepreneurial (nearly half of poor urbanites in Indonesia, Pakistan, and Nicaragua operated their own businesses), although debt remained a constant concern (94 percent of the Pakistani urban poor owed money). When poor people did have money to spare, they spent a surprising amount on entertainment (radios, TVs, weddings) and relatively little on food.

—*"The Economic Lives of the Poor," Abhijit V. Banerjee and Esther Duflo, Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

The Possessions of the Poor

Percent of households living on less than $2 a day that own:



DEMOGRAPHICS

Baby Bust

A paper by three Austrian population experts takes up Europe's falling birthrates, which have dropped below replacement level in many countries, and investigates whether they are likely to rebound, level off, or continue to fall. Current United Nations projections estimate that birthrates will level off at around 1.85 children per woman in most countries. But it's just as likely, the authors argue, that Europe will find itself caught in a "low fertility trap" that keeps driving the Continent's population downward. They cite three elements that might create this cycle of childlessness. First, there's the negative momentum created by a declining population, in which fewer women enter their prime childbearing years every generation, and their lower numbers lead to fewer births overall even if the birthrate suddenly returns to replacement level—and many fewer if it doesn't. Second, people who grow up in a largely childless society may internalize a much smaller "ideal family size" and have fewer children. And third, as the population of Europe ages, the income prospects of younger workers will likely decline, creating an age of diminished expectations that will lead young people to delay having children still further, or have none at all. The low-fertility trap, the authors caution, is only a hypothesis, but it's plausible enough to deserve "serious consideration"—especially since it may soon be too late for government policies to reverse the possible downward spiral.

—*"The Low Fertility Trap Hypothesis," Wolfgang Lutz, Vegard Skirbekk, and Maria Rita Testa, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis*

For links to the documents discussed on this page, visit www.theatlantic.com/doc/200703/primarysources.

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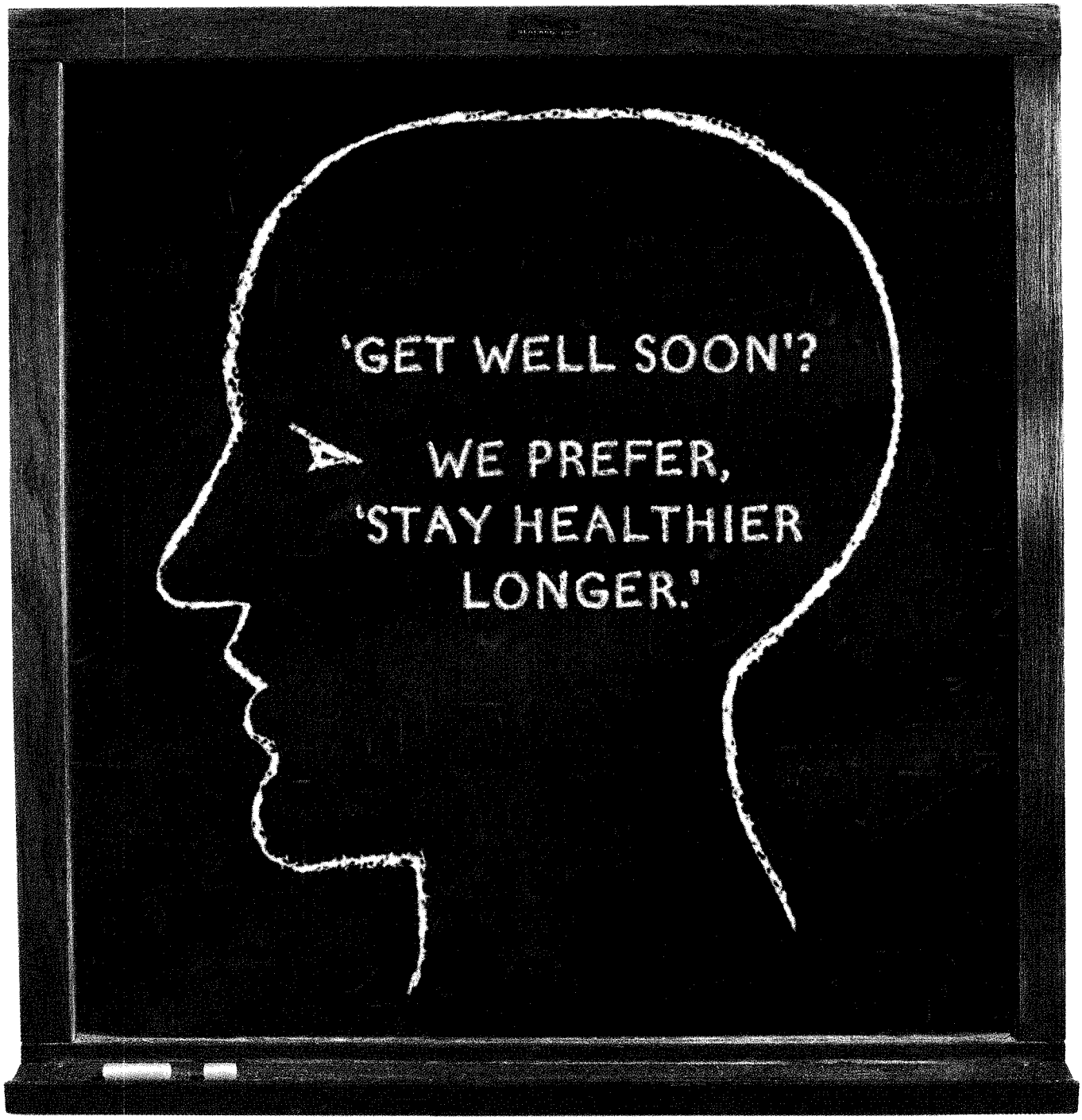

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POLL

LEAVING IRAQ

The Atlantic *recently asked a group of foreign-policy authorities about the potential withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq.*

Q: Will a significant U.S. troop presence (50,000 or more) still be in Iraq five years from now?

73% NO

"No. I doubt the Iraqi leadership will tolerate it, and I am sure the American public will not. *Should* they be there five years from now? Yes, if we are going to try to stabilize the situation, but I doubt it will happen."

"The opportunities lost in 2003–2004 cannot be recovered by sacrificing another 3,000 soldiers, surging 30,000 soldiers, or keeping 50,000 soldiers in Iraq for five years … Prolonging our presence is only increasing the damage to our vital military and political institutions and to America's reputation."

"No. At some point in the next five years, some political force (or coalition) will gain sufficient traction to control the country and will not want such a sizable U.S. presence."

"No. The U.S is likely to have only a small presence (under 10,000) in Iraq in five years, consisting mostly of advisers and trainers of Iraqi forces and police."

27% YES

"Yes. It's our only hope. Otherwise, all is lost in Iraq, with all that [entails] in the region."

Q: How should the United States withdraw from Iraq?

46% A PHASED WITHDRAWAL, REDEPLOYING MOST U.S. TROOPS OVER ONE TO TWO YEARS

"The time when U.S. troops could make a decisive difference in Iraq's political evolution has passed. Sectarian bloodlust is difficult to stop, and only the Iraqis can stop it. An immediate withdrawal would guarantee more chaos, as sectarian militias rush to fill the political vacuum. Washington needs to use the phased withdrawal to prepare Iraq and its neighbors for the departure of U.S. troops. We no longer can have a strategy for victory. We need a strategy to prevent a greater catastrophe."

"I expect that after a surge in troop numbers in the first half of 2007 (which will not be effective in reducing the carnage), we will begin a phased withdrawal. Given our justifiable concerns about … a vacuum of power in the region, we are likely to redeploy a substantial number of the troops leaving Iraq (30,000 to 50,000) elsewhere in the region (e.g., Kuwait and other Gulf states). Our naval presence will remain muscular."

"The practicalities of disengagement take time."

24% A LIMITED WITHDRAWAL, MOVING MOST OF THE U.S. MILITARY TO A FEW BASES INSIDE THE COUNTRY UNTIL IRAQ IS STABLE

"[But] 'withdrawal' cannot be considered, for or against, without considering the political changes the United States should be promoting inside and outside of Iraq."

24% THE UNITED STATES SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERING WITHDRAWAL AT THIS TIME

"We should make one last try, surging into Baghdad with 30,000-plus troops for twelve to sixteen months to get the momentum swinging right. If we don't jolt the situation there with something dramatic, then we'll surely lose and should just get out as soon as possible. No gradualism!"

5% AN IMMEDIATE, FULL-SCALE WITHDRAWAL

"Only because there is going to be no plan offered by the White House that links our military posture to a genuine political strategy that is based on facts on the ground in Iraq (as the Baker-Hamilton report did). Given this sad outcome, the sooner we leave, the better."

PARTICIPANTS (44): *Kenneth Adelman, Ronald Asmus, Samuel Berger, Daniel Blumenthal, Max Boot, Stephen Bosworth, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Daniel Byman, Warren Christopher, Wesley Clark, Richard Clarke, Eliot Cohen, William Cohen, Ivo Daalder, James Dobbins, Lawrence Eagleburger, Douglas Feith, John Gaddis, Leslie Gelb, Marc Grossman, John Hamre, Gary Hart, Bruce Hoffman, John Hulsman, Robert Hunter, Tony Judt, Robert Kagan, David Kay, Andrew Krepinevich, Charles Kupchan, John Lehman, James Lindsay, Edward Luttwak, John McLaughlin, William Nash, Joseph Nye, Carlos Pascual, Thomas Pickering, Joseph Ralston, Susan Rice, Wendy Sherman, Ann Marie Slaughter, James Steinberg, Anthony Zinni.*

Not all participants answered both questions; percentages do not always sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

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FIRST PRINCIPLES

Cheap private schools are educating poor children across the developing world—but without much encouragement from the international aid establishment.

The Ten-Cent Solution

BY CLIVE CROOK

If good ideas were all that mattered, everybody who has heard of Jeffrey Sachs would have heard of James Tooley as well—but they aren't, and you almost certainly haven't. In fact, even if you are keenly interested in education, aid, or Third World development, which are Tooley's areas of research, you still probably haven't heard of him.

This is not because his work is dull or unimportant. His findings are surprising, and they bear directly and profoundly on the relief of extreme poverty all over the world. (Name me a more important issue than that.) The reason you haven't heard of James Tooley is that his work is something of an embarrassment to the official aid and development industry. He has demonstrated something that many development professionals would rather not know—and would prefer that you not know, either.

Tooley is a professor of education policy at England's University of Newcastle upon Tyne. Several years ago he was working as a consultant in Hyderabad, India, for the International Finance Corporation, an arm of the World Bank. One afternoon, while wandering around the alleys beside the Charminar (a sixteenth-century monument and Hyderabad's best-known tourist attraction), he came across a school for the children of slum dwellers. To his surprise, he found that this was not a state school but a private one—providing education to the extremely poor and collecting fees (of a few rupees a day, or less than a dime) for its services. Intrigued, he kept looking, and found other, similar schools. They were typically small and shabby operations, sometimes occupying a single classroom, staffed in some cases by just the teacher-proprietor and an assistant. Yet they were busy—crowded with eager pupils—and the teacher was actually teaching. (This, Tooley knew, was not something you could take for granted in the classrooms of Indian public schools.)

SCHOOL FOR PEANUTS: Private-school students in the red-light district of Calcutta

MARK HENLEY/PANOS PICTURES

For years education officials in most developing countries (and workers in international aid agencies, too) have talked as though private education for the very poor barely existed. The only hope for equipping these unfortunate people with basic literacy and numeracy, they've said, was to improve the reach and quality of free, compulsory, state-provided schooling.

But that hope appears dim at the moment. Public schools in most poor countries, where they operate at all, have long been recognized to be ineffective. Teachers are frequently unqualified for their work. Perhaps worse, they are often uninterested in it: In many poor countries, teaching jobs are viewed as sinecures, and many teachers are disinclined to show up for work at all. They do tend to organize, however. Their salaries add up, and public schools in most developing countries make heavy demands on the public purse. The whole issue has therefore been seen as a daunting question of resources: Vast sums will be required to provide free universal education of tolerable quality in Africa and South Asia; there is no cheap alternative; and the help of foreign donors will be essential.

The many fee-based slum schools that Tooley saw within a few minutes' walk of the Charminar made him wonder about all this. So he began researching the reach and performance of private schools for the extremely poor in India and elsewhere, supported not by an

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official agency but by the private Templeton Foundation. What he found was startling.

In Hyderabad, a city of more than 6 million people, Tooley and his team—confining their search to poor areas lacking amenities such as running water, electricity, and paved roads—counted 918 schools. Only about 40 percent were run or financed by the government; 60 percent were private. Of those, some were "recognized" by the government, but most were officially unknown to the authorities. These black-market private schools were smaller on average than the other kinds—but they still accounted for about a quarter of all the children in any sort of school. Remarkably, some of the slots in these private slum schools were offered free or at reduced rates: The parents of full-fee students, desperately poor themselves, willingly subsidized those in direst need.

This flourishing educational enterprise is all the more surprising once you understand that India has deliberately discriminated against private education—forbidding for-profit schools, for instance, and requiring schools to be run as trusts rather than proprietorships, and limiting their ability to borrow. Despite these handicaps, private education for the very poor has evidently thrived.

What Tooley stumbled onto in Hyderabad turns out to be typical not just of India but of all the other places he subsequently researched—including parts of China, Ghana, Kenya, and Nigeria. In every case, private education is a principal lifeline for the abjectly poor. In the areas of Ghana and Nigeria that Tooley's team has canvassed, an outright majority of poor children are attending private schools run without support from the government. Often, the schools are run by just a few teachers. They put out shingles in the way that physicians do in the United States, and are paid directly by their charges.

As Tooley relates it, the response of the international development community to his research has been less than enthusiastic. Even if private schools are much more prevalent than we had previously thought, he's been told, they are obviously no good. Standards in such schools are bound to be low.

But the development community seems to be wrong about that, too. On the whole, dime-a-day for-profit schools are doing a better job of teaching the poorest children than the far more expensive state schools. In many localities, private schools operate alongside a free, government-run alternative. Many parents, poor as they may be, have chosen to reject it and to pay perhaps a tenth of their meager incomes to educate their children privately. They would hardly do that unless they expected better results.

Better results are what they get. After comparing test scores for literacy and basic math, Tooley has shown that pupils in private schools do better than their state-school equivalents—at between a half and a quarter of the per-pupil teacher cost. In some places, such as Gansu, China, the researchers found that private schools serving the poor had worse facilities than comparable state schools; in Hyderabad, they were better equipped (with blackboards, desks, toilets, drinking water, and so on). Regardless, the tests so far show that private-school students do better across the board.

Why have these findings been so reluctantly received? The answer is politics. The consensus on economic development—specifically, on the role of the state in promoting growth—cycles to and fro. At the moment, orthodox thinking embraces a leading role for the market in most areas of economic life. But in most developing countries, as in many rich ones (including the United States), schooling is widely regarded as quite another matter. Children's education is higher than commerce. These realms must not be allowed to mix. Many development and education officials wish to enshrine free education as a universal human right. Education, in other words, is too important to be left to the market.

In this view, if state schools are failing, which nobody denies, they need to be fixed, whatever the cost. And this is how the challenge of education in developing countries is currently framed: Governments need to spend more on their schools. One could more easily sympathize with that view if the state systems were easily fixable. In many developing countries, certainly in India, it would be unrealistic to think so, even if one could say, "Hang the expense." The problems seem systemic, not fiscal.

Most of those who campaign for greatly increased aid to poor countries would wish to see governments spend much of that money on state-run schools. The goal is admirable, but the method may be counterproductive. Tooley's research suggests that small-scale support for private slum schools—through scholarship programs, backing for school-voucher schemes, or subsidized microfinance—might do far more good than a big aid push directed at government-run education.

Tooley has been publishing his research in education journals but has also written for libertarian and conservative think tanks. Unfortunately, these associations have pushed him further outside the development mainstream. Perhaps most alienating, his findings (as he notes) conform very well to the views of the late Milton Friedman, who spent the last years of his life arguing that publicly funded vouchers and a market of privately run competing schools were the way to fix another education system in urgent need of repair: America's. All the more reason why, so far as some development officials are concerned, Tooley's obscurity is welcome.

As for Tooley himself, he is now moving beyond research alone, preparing to embark on a new project: the management of a new $100 million fund to invest in private schools for the very poor in developing countries. Development professionals need not be concerned, however. The money is from a private foundation. It won't waste any country's aid budget.

Clive Crook is an *Atlantic* senior editor.

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MARCH 2007

MANHUNT

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BY **MARK BOWDEN**

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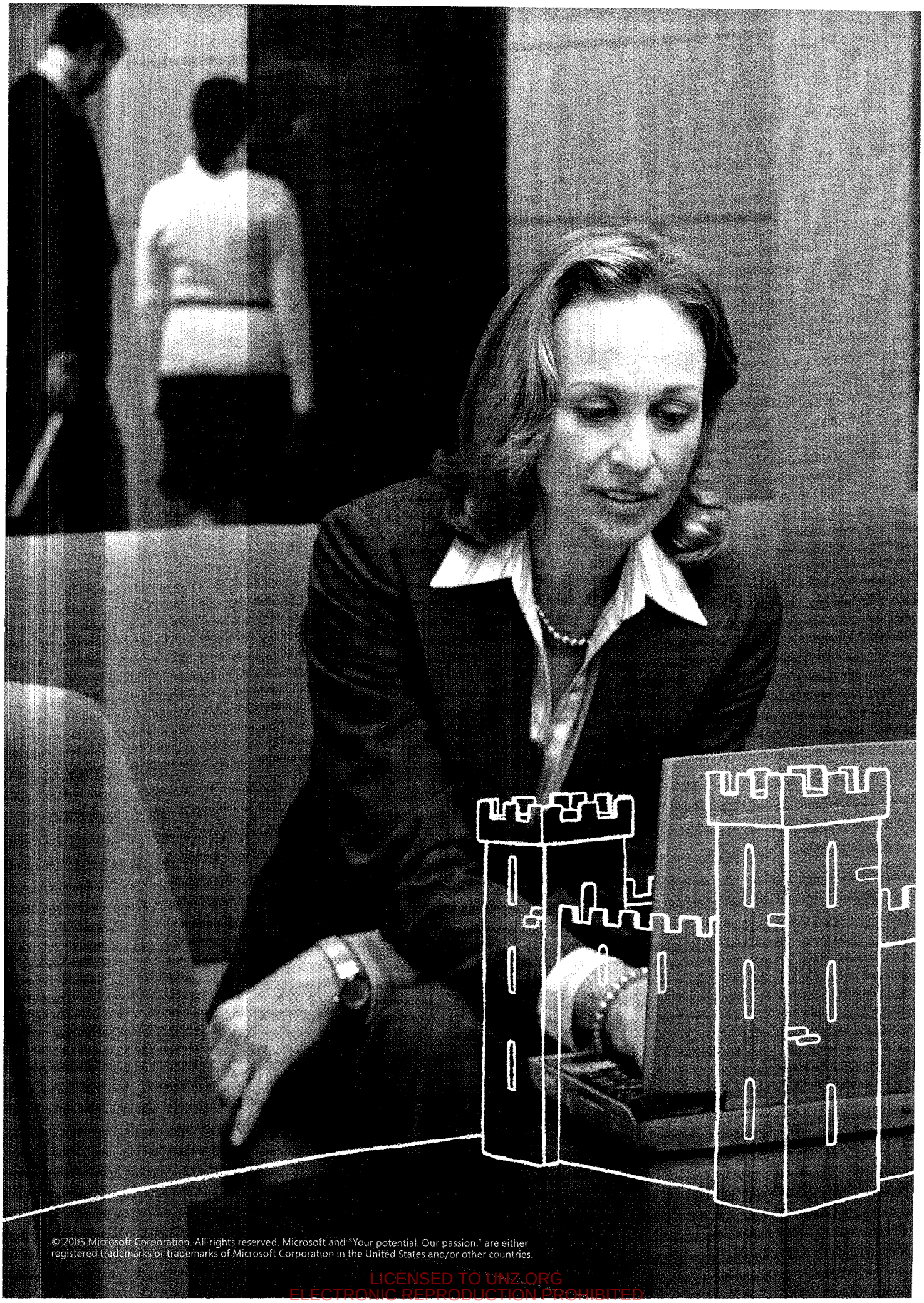

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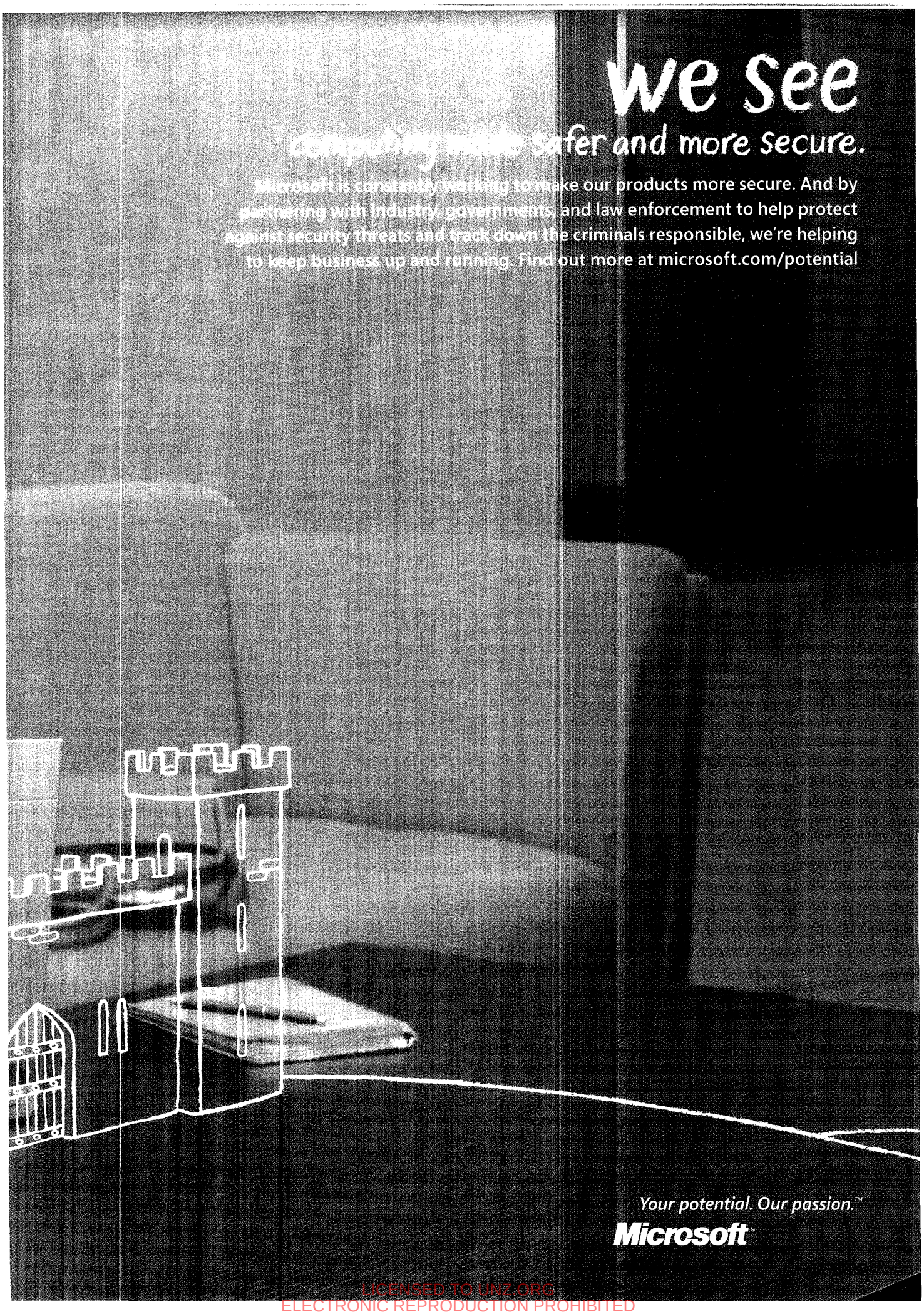

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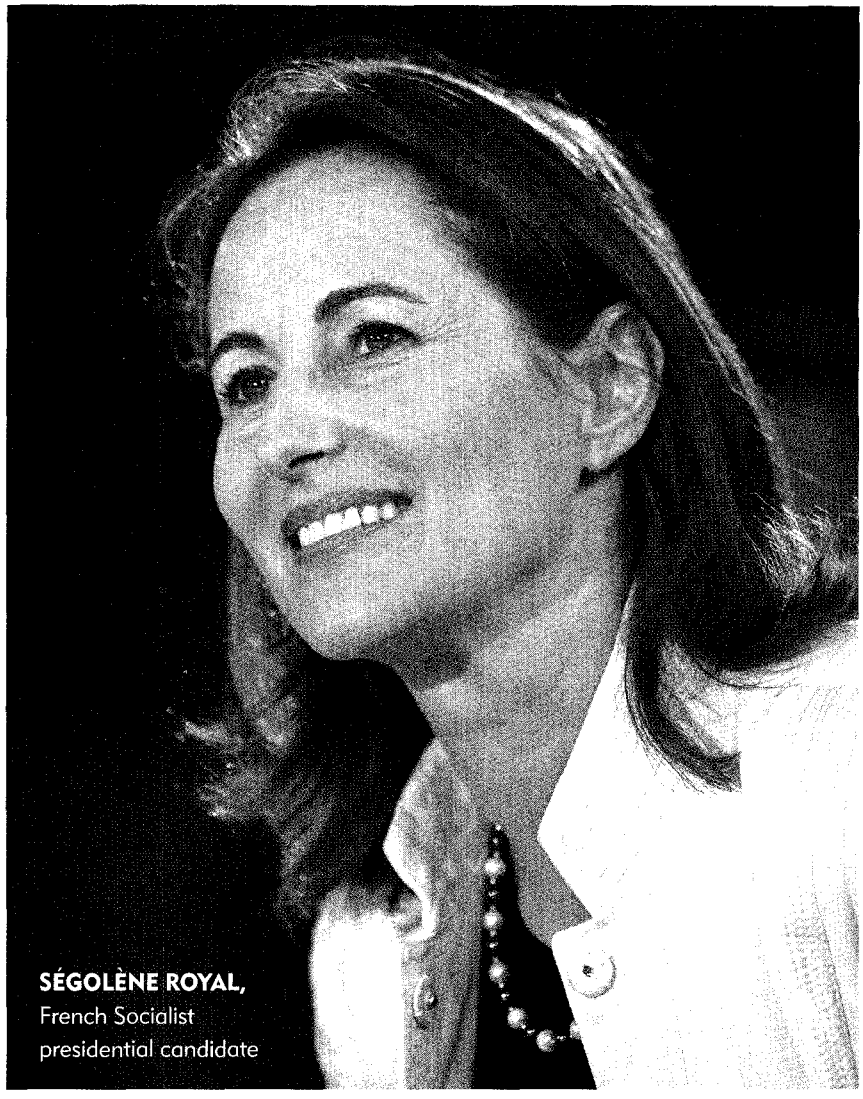
BRIEF LIVES

A vote for France's first female president may not deliver the political change the country wants.

The Royal Oui?

BY CHARLES TRUEHEART



SÉGOLÈNE ROYAL, French Socialist presidential candidate

VINCENT KESSLER/REUTERS

France is mired in an antiquated economic and social system, overtaxed and overregulated, underemployed and underproductive, congenitally immobile when not sporadically violent. The French themselves say so, and their pride is wounded.

In fact, the French have been declaring their disgust with the status quo for some time now: by voting, in shocking numbers, for quasi-loony far-right candidates; by crippling President Jacques Chirac's clumsy efforts at loosening labor laws; by torching cars and public buildings in an outpouring of frustration and despair; by vetoing a new European constitution written by a former French president and endorsed by virtually the whole French political class.

So it follows that for the presidential elections of 2007, a two-round affair in late April and early May, the two leading parties of the right and left have chosen upstart candidates. Both Nicolas Sarkozy, fifty-two, and Ségolène Royal, fifty-three, mimicked the restive mood of the street by brazenly usurping power from their elders, notably (in Sarkozy's case) a sitting seventy-four-year-old president who never really said he wasn't running for a third term.

A country evidently hungry for change rewarded both candidates for breaking with party orthodoxy and political euphemism alike. Sarkozy has called for a "peaceful rupture" with the past, an ironic plea from the standard-bearer of the party that has governed France for a decade. And Royal has shocked her own Socialist Party by calling for boot camps for juvenile offenders, reeducation for their parents, and a return to a "just order" of hard work and family values. Both also made waves by pointing beyond French borders at alternative models of governance, Sarkozy looking toward the United States (*quelle horreur!*) and Royal to Britain and Sweden.

Sarkozy—President Chirac's sharp-elbowed interior minister and renegade party chief, long a fixture in the public eye—has developed a law-and-order rap in sync with voters tempted by Jean-Marie Le Pen's far-right National Front, always a threat to both mainstream parties. Royal, with her own brand of tough love—and with a smile to answer Sarkozy's scowl—has managed to appeal to those voters too.

But not just to them. Her transcendent appeal is not about her policy prescriptions (they've been paltry) so much as it is about her own self—and about the way France wants to see itself. Her gender obviously has something to do with this.

She first caught the eye of France, in fact, by an act that took part of her private life public and fused feminism and maternity. While serving as the environment minister under François Mitterrand, she posed for *Paris Match* magazine and national television shortly after she delivered the last of her four children. A marginal party figure in some eyes, she somehow came to dominate French political popularity polling thereafter. And that began to matter three years ago when she showed unwonted electoral chops by wresting power from the regional machine of Chirac's then prime minister, Jean-Pierre Raffarin, to become president of Poitou-Charentes.

Last spring and summer the old guard of the Socialist Party stood agog when Royal emerged as a credible national presidential candidate by matching up well in polls against Sarkozy while the "elephants" of her party did not. "The

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moment when Ségolène's victory became perceived by women as personal vengeance against their husband, their father, or their boss, there was nothing to do," lamented Jack Lang, the sixty-seven-year-old former culture minister and inveterate Socialist presidential aspirant.

Another, younger elephant with distinct presidential ambitions was Royal's own lifelong partner and the father of her children, François Hollande, head of the Socialist Party. He bravely soldiers on now for her victory, furnishing a maverick candidate with the official party apparatus and possibly reassuring Socialist voters uneasy with Royal's dangerously free thinking—about revisiting the thirty-five-hour workweek or suggesting that teachers in particular should work longer hours, for example. Hollande and Royal, whatever may go on in their discreetly opaque private lives, remain successful political partners (think, perhaps, of the Clintons) who have also raised four children together while following busy careers—not unlike a great many other French couples.

Aymeric Mantoux and Benoist Simmat, in their scathing biography *Ségolène Royal: La Dame Aux Deux Visages* (*Ségolène Royal: The Lady With Two Faces*), describe Royal as "a woman of the left and a mother of the right," which says it well. Royal has turned the "minor" cabinet portfolios poohpoohed by the political class into powerful emblems of her commitment to what ordinary people care about: family, education, work, order, the environment.

But when the media and the opposition clamor for a program, anything they can sink their claws into, Royal resists and deflects and defers to the populace. On her first foreign trip as the Socialist presidential candidate, to the Middle East, she stumbled a couple of times in the rhetorical crossfire, but wound up embraced by Ehud Olmert and returned to no discernible change in her very positive poll numbers. Indeed, she has constructed a presidential campaign, at least so far, around *not* having all the answers, around "listening." She pioneered interactive politicking on the Internet here with a site whose name, Désirs d'Avenir (Desires for the Future), says it all about the fuzziness of her profile. In effect, Royal is asking voters to look at her person, not at her party or her plan.

The Mary Tyler Moore smile aside, Ségolène Royal has a crisp, distant hauteur that she may have inherited from her father, a monocled disciplinarian and French army lieutenant colonel whose brothers were Petainistes. She was born in Dakar and moved to Martinique before he retired; after that, the family settled in a village in the Lorraine region to a straitened petit-bourgeois existence. She was the fourth of eight brothers and sisters, the latter "inferior beings" in the family, she says. At nineteen, while a student in nearby Nancy, she took in her mother, who had finally left her autocratic husband, and helped her to sue him in court.

Royal's family crucible has captivated the French public, for it grounds the candidate's image in a French log-cabin story about a girl from the provinces who threw off a bitter yoke and reinvented herself in the city. It also explains for many her choice of a family without marriage (not so unusual in France) and the victimology that tints her rhetoric, although always with a culminating triumph over adversity.

"I decided that the injustice done to women should not become fatal to me," she said in a recent television interview. "I saw school as a way to take back my freedom, and that's the way it should be for young people today." In one speech in the late 1990s, she chose to address the sainted Joan of Arc herself: "I want to tell you, in the name of all women, our sisters who were immolated, mutilated, sold, exploited, killed at birth because they were women, that we need so much for other Joans to rise up in the world," declared the future volunteer. "Politics, like you, should be disturbing, boldly generous, fiercely ethical."

Marc Lambron, an esteemed novelist here, was intrigued enough to dash off a book about Royal last fall; it opens with the speculation that she is another secret daughter of François Mitterrand. Purely figuratively, of course, this former Mitterrand aide is cast as a symbol of the left's monarchic succession.

Over glasses of tomato juice in a Left Bank café, the entertaining Lambron compared Royal's decapitation of the Socialist Party leadership to Uma Thurman's vengeful swordplay in *Kill Bill*. He also compared Royal, not without disdain, to a televangelist for a confidence-starved nation, with her "charismatic message of hope, of restoring pride and finishing with this masochism." Her phrase *just order*, he noted, is from Aquinas by way of Benedict XVI. And against the saintly white tailoring Royal favors, Lambron added, stands Sarkozy, who always seems to appear shadowy and sly—"the Soprano thing."

Lambron is unbothered and unsurprised by Royal's refusal to be drawn into what might be called inside-the-beltway arguments about policy. The French put a different kind of store in their chief of state: The president is, in a sense, the last vestige of the royal. If they elect Ségolène Royal, Lambron believes, it will reflect a healthy desire for *alternance* (throwing out incumbents) and for a new way of seeing themselves in the mirror. "We want to be a country of prophets, revolutionaries," he said. "We like to give lessons to the rest of Europe about modernity."

Since concrete and painful solutions do not seem to be yet at hand, what better placebo—or even potential catalyst—than electing a modern woman as president of France? I like one of the slogans being bandied about to describe the gamble of the French voter this spring: "Better to be wrong with Ségolène than right with Sarko."

When the French go to bed with a new president on the night of May 6, we can say with certainty that voters will have opted for change. Unspecified change, and maybe just the appearance of change. And if they choose Ségolène Royal, possibly narrowly, they will have taken a risk that says more about their hunger for leadership than it does, necessarily, about Madame Royal.

Charles Trueheart's profile of Nicolas Sarkozy appeared in the September 2005 *Atlantic*.

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POST MORTEM

Saparmurat Niyazov (1940–2006)

One-Man Stan

BY MARK STEYN

What with the fall of the Soviet Union and the rise of Islam, there's been a huge proliferation of Stans in the news. There's Tajik and Uzbek, a Nuristan and a Nurestan. There's a Baluchistan and a Balochistan and probably a Biloxistan. There are Kremlin-pressured Stans (Bashkortostan) and vowel-challenged Stans (Kyrgyzstan) and Stans that sound vaguely like some big Corporate-Mergerstan (Karakalpakstan). There's Waziristan, where Osama bin Laden is said to be holed up like a Muslim Pimpernel: They seek him in Waziristan, they seek him in Overtheristan.

So, in a world of Stans, with every Nickelandimistan clamoring for attention, how do you make yours Stan out from the crowd? This was the challenge faced in 1991 by an obscure Communist apparatchik named Saparmurat Niyazov when his Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic suddenly found itself pushed out onto the world stage as the newly independent nation of Turkmenistan. In Soviet Central Asia, Turkmenistan was pretty much the end of the line Stan-wise. You flew in across the Caspian Sea, from Baku in Azerbaijan—the Stan that thinks it's a Jan—and you pretty much had to fly back, there being nothing to fly on to apart from remote northern Iran and its crazy mullahs, and rubble-strewn Afghanistan with its even crazier ones. So President Niyazov had a problem: How to put Turkmenistan on the map?

He could have used the world's fifth-largest natural-gas reserves to transform his nation into an economic powerhouse with an educated population and a vibrant cultural scene. But that would have been too obvious. Instead, he determined that his was going to be the nuttiest Stan, a by-no-means uncompetitive field to those for whom the suffix conjures large numbers of excitable young chaps in beards jumping up and down shouting, "Death to the Great Satan!" In fact, Niyazov banned young men from sporting facial hair: Under his leadership, Turkmenistan was the most pogonophobic Stan in the world. He didn't really require excitable men, hirsute or otherwise. His was a one-man Stan, a cult of personality under which airports, major cities, and a passing meteorite were named after the great leader.

A short man with the worst dye job in Central Asia, Niyazov loomed large and gilded in public. Statues abounded, including a glittering behemoth on the tallest edifice in the capital that supposedly rotates to ensure his features are always bathed in sunlight, though it has a tendency to break down and jerk into action as erratically as he did. There are multiple statues of him as a baby: In one he is sprawled across the globe, in another held aloft by his mother atop a raging bull. If he never quite succeeded in sprawling across the global scene, he certainly rode high on his bull. He produced five volumes of poetry and read nightly on television, one remorseless Turkmenistanza after another. He banned news anchors from wearing makeup because he found it hard to tell the men from the women and had no desire to see the country degenerate into a sad Eastern imitation of the decadent Ratherstan and Couricistan.

In 2005, he banned lip-synching because he was tired of seeing elderly singers mouthing to their old hits and reducing Turkmen culture to just another Millivanillistan. He banned ballet because ... well, it just wasn't his bag. "How can the Turkmen people be encouraged to love ballet if there is no ballet in their blood?" he asked. "I do not understand ballet. What use is it then to me?" But melons he did understand: They were in his blood, and they were a lot of use to him. He declared a national holiday in honor of melons and urged his people to "let the life of every Turkman be as beautiful as our melons." He deployed them in folksy aphorisms: As he sagely observed, "You can't catch two melons in one hand."

That was Turkmenistan's problem. Juggling the twin melons of societal progress and self-glorification, its leader chose to let the first one drop. He preferred to be known as "Turkmenbashi," which I believe means "Basher of the Turkmen"—no, wait, "Father of the Turkmen." It was an Atatürk-like touch that led a lot of commentators who should have known better to try and pass him off as Turkmenistan's Kemal, a modernizing reformer. He was a repressive dictator increasingly prone to show trials and torture and Stalinist purges, but the world will cut you a lot of slack if you're a kook: To modify the old actors' line, killing is easy, comedy is hard. And, in an age of gray thugs, Turkmenbashi was every Fleet Street tabloid's favorite totalitarian nutjob. His finest hour was his redesignation of the days of the week and months of the year under a law passed in 2002. January he renamed for himself: It's now the month of "Turkmenbashi." April he'd proposed to call "Mother" in honor of mothers in general, but he was prevailed upon to rename it "Gurbansoltan" in honor of one mom in particular—his own. Gurbansoltan had saved her infant child but perished, along with the rest of the family, in the 1948 earthquake that leveled the capital city Ashgabat.

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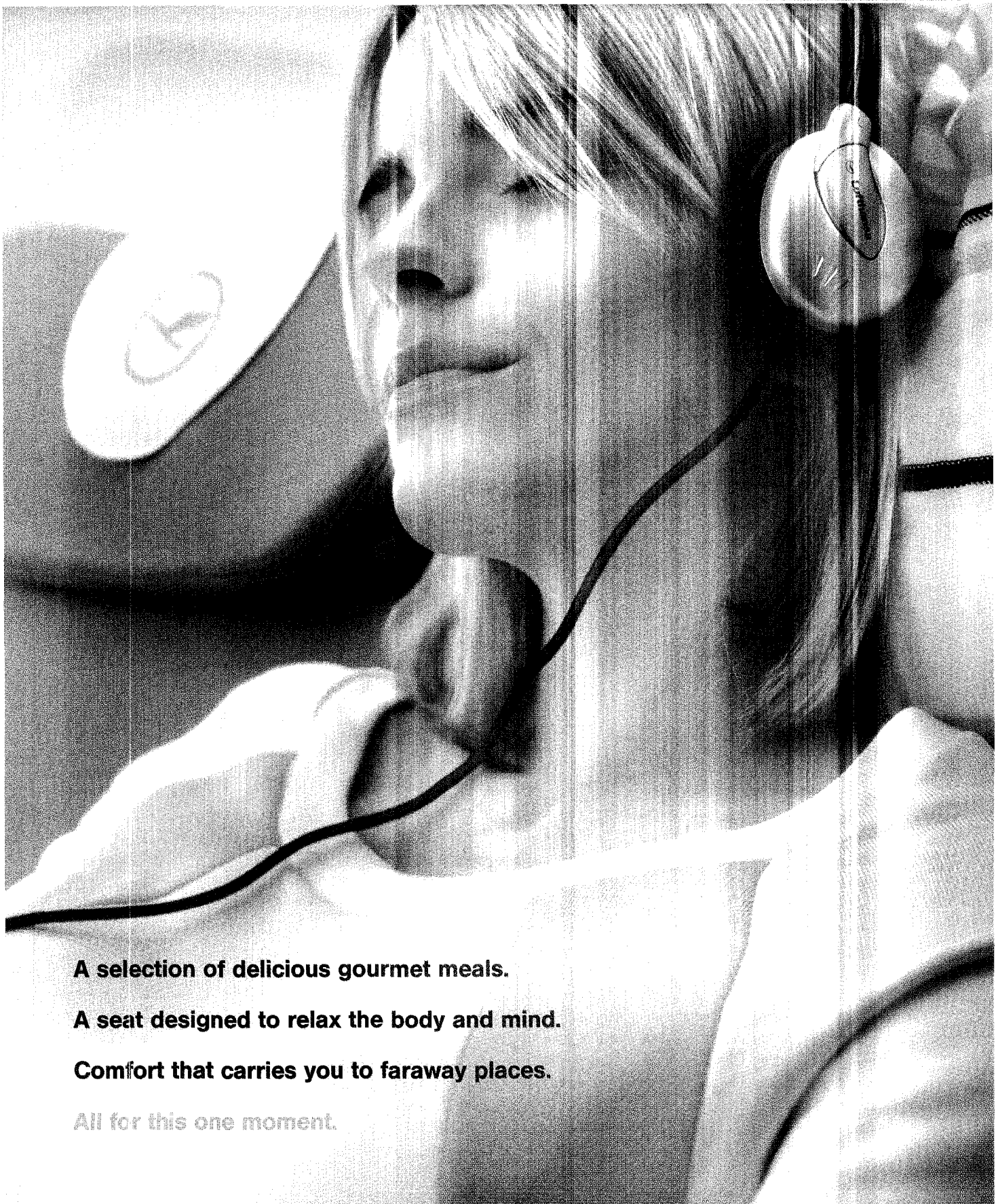

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The eight-year-old Saparmurat was sent to an orphanage and went on to study engineering. Working at the Bezmeinskaya Power Station, he became active in the local Communist Party. He married a Russian. In 1985, when Moscow needed a new first secretary for the Turkmen party, Niyazov's non-Turkman wife, his Little Orphan Annie childhood, and the loss of every close relative in the earthquake were seen as signs that he'd be less prone to the stand-by-your-clan corruption that had plagued Ashgabat politics. Niyazov was a loyal Communist hard-liner longer than necessary: He approved of the 1991 coup against Gorbachev and opposed Turkmen independence. But after the Soviet Union liquidated itself, he didn't have a lot of choice in the matter and embraced Turkmen nationalism as best he could.

In 1992, he was elected president with 99.5 percent of the vote. Two years after that squeaker, 99.9 percent of the electorate voted to extend his five-year term to ten years, and, in 1999, he "reluctantly" acceded to the wishes of his People's Council to become president-for-life. The lifelong Communist with the Russian bride dedicated himself to root-and-branch Turkmenization. Cleansing his country of Soviet influence meant little more than replacing it with a sickly suffocating cult of personality, but in dictatorships the line between necessary political hygiene and nauseating self-promotion is often a fine one, and especially so in a land where the leading soap powder is called Barf. Like a Central Asian Vegas, his desert kingdom began sprouting ever-more-startling attractions: man-made lakes and cypress forests, ice palaces, and the world's largest handmade carpet (his mother had been a rug maker)—a three-thousand-square-foot celebration of "The Epoch of the Great Saparmurat Niyazov" that tended to confirm the impression that the entire nation was his oversized doormat.

But, of course, not everything could be swept under the carpet. He might reasonably have expected that his term as president-for-life would continue awhile yet. Unfortunately, he had a history of heart trouble. He'd closed every hospital in the country outside Ashgabat on the grounds that they were "not needed," ditched the Hippocratic oath for a personal pledge of allegiance to himself, and replaced the remaining doctors with new medical staff more or less straight off the farm. While everything from anemia to bubonic plague took hold in Turkmen villages, Turkmenbashi flew in German specialists for his own health needs. Yet it seems likely that his unexpected death derives at least in part from the prevailing ethos in what was left of his country's medical system.

MONUMENTAL ACHIEVEMENT: A gold-plated Saparmurat Niyazov in Ashgabat

AP PHOTO/BURHAN OZBILICI

His legacy is the *Ruhnama*, the spiritual tract he published in 2001. Its prose was barely workmanlike and barely Turkmenlike: It's what the Little Red Book would have been had Mao spent too much time with Deepak Chopra and Dr. Phil. But it was immediately raised to equal status with the Bible and the Koran. It was hailed as "The Answer to All Questions," including those on the driver's test. Ninety percent of the population is Muslim, yet Turkmenbashi promoted himself to prophet and demanded that the *Ruhnama* be displayed in every house of worship and kissed by all who enter therein. When the chief imam, Nasurallah Ibadullah, objected to what he regarded, reasonably enough, as an act of idolatry, he was arrested (along with other dissenting imams) and sentenced to twenty-three years in jail.

Turkmenbashi got away with it, as he did with naming the biggest mosque in the country after himself. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Iran has exported huge sums of money and thousands of imams to Central Asia to transform hitherto relatively relaxed Muslim populations. It's worked everywhere except Turkmenistan, where the president's subjects have proved all but immune to the blandishments of the mullahs or, indeed, of the Taliban, another neighbor. At a time of rapid radicalization of Muslim communities from Indonesia, Thailand, and Bangladesh to Britain, Belgium, and Scandinavia, it's instructive to find an example of a successful counterstrategy.

As Stans go, his model was Stan Laurel: This is another fine mess you've gotten me into. Turkmenistan was a fine mess its leader got himself into: 60 percent unemployment, 60 percent poverty, massive health crises. Yet no jihadists. If he dropped the democracy melon, he nevertheless booted the Islamist one way off into the long grass. No doubt, in the wake of his death, prancing ballerinas, pancaked news anchors, bearded lip-synchers who use the Roman calendar, and many more unsavory types are emerging from under their rocks. It will be interesting to see what other pathologies take hold.

Mark Steyn is a columnist for the *Chicago Sun-Times* and other publications. He is the author of *America Alone*.

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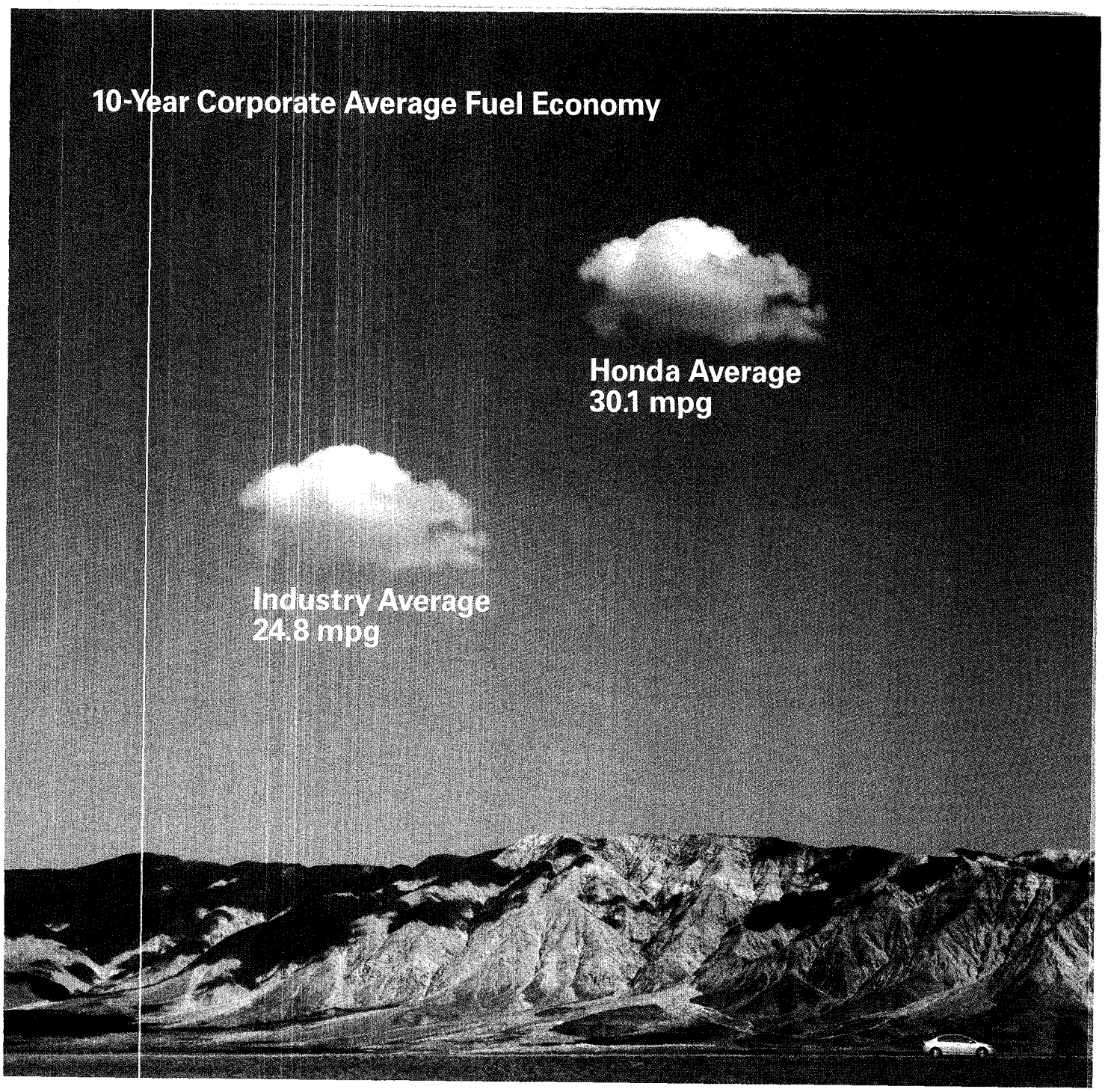

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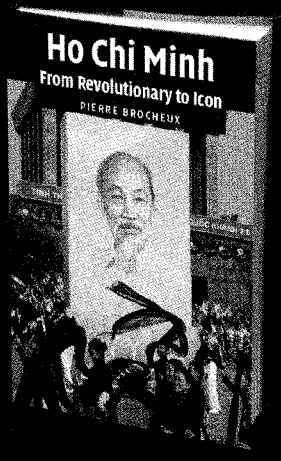

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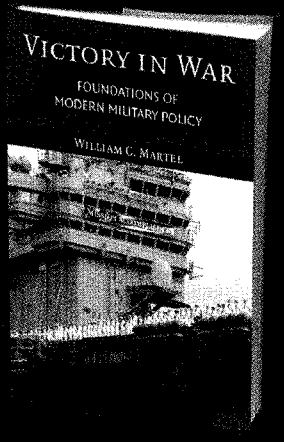

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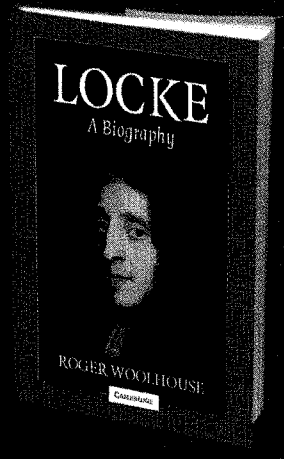

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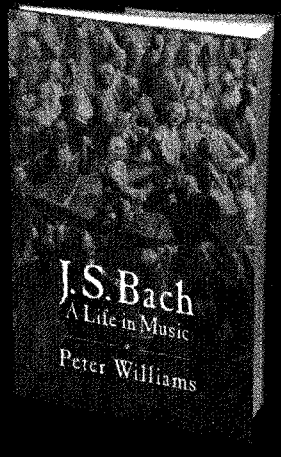

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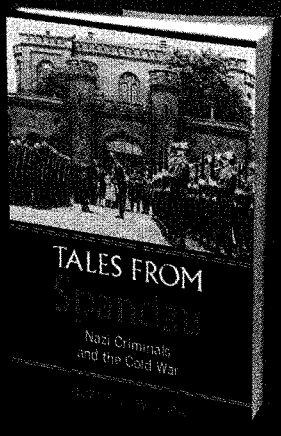

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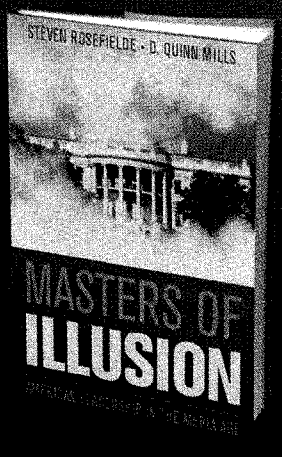

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150 YEARS OF THE ATLANTIC

This is the thirteenth in a series of archival excerpts in honor of the magazine's 150th anniversary. For the full text of these articles, visit www.theatlantic.com/ideastour.

Religion & Faith

RELIGION AND INSANITY

December 1857

BY OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

In the magazine's second issue, Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr., the son of a Calvinist clergyman, poked fun at the rigid orthodoxy of Calvinism and similar religions, suggesting that intelligent people subjected to such harsh beliefs tended to go crazy in self-defense.

Insanity is often the logic of an accurate mind overtasked ... Stupidity often saves a man from going mad. We frequently see persons in insane hospitals, sent there in consequence of what are called *religious* mental disturbances. I confess that I think better of them than of many who hold the same notions, and keep their wits and appear to enjoy life very well, outside of the asylums. Any decent person ought to go mad, if he really holds such or such opinions. It is very much to his discredit in every point of view, if he does not. What is the use of my saying what some of these opinions are? Perhaps more than one of you hold such as I should think ought to send you straight over to Somerville [the local psychiatric hospital] if you have any logic in your heads or any human feeling in your hearts. Anything that is brutal, cruel, heathenish, that makes life hopeless for the most of mankind and perhaps for entire races,—anything that assumes the necessity of the extermination of instincts which were given to be regulated,—no matter by what name you call it,—no matter whether a fakir, or a monk, or a deacon believes it,—if received, ought to produce insanity in every well-regulated mind.

Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 175–184

THE PERSISTENCE OF FAITH

February 1948

BY REINHOLD NIEBUHR

As the twentieth century neared its midpoint, the Protestant theologian and political thinker Reinhold Niebuhr argued that however much humanity might advance technically, scientifically, and intellectually, it would never outgrow its need for religious sustenance.

Mankind is always progressing, but the essential needs of man remain the same. Life continues to be fragmentary and to be challenged by death no matter how powerful men become. The fear of death prompts men to complete life falsely and to express their frustration in lust for power, envy of one another, and a sense of false security in material comfort and power. These corruptions are rooted in the very center of personality and can therefore be uprooted only by a radical change at the heart of personality. The renewal of life through repentance is therefore a message of hope and judgment for every age. It will yet prove its relevance and power to an age which imagined that intellectual progress would obviate the necessity of religious renewal.

Vol. 181, No. 2, pp. 57–62

THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER

January 1959

BY C. S. LEWIS

In 1959, the British scholar and novelist C. S. Lewis—a devout Christian and the author of The Screwtape Letters *and* The Chronicles of Narnia, *among other books—took up the question of whether prayer really works.*

Some years ago I got up one morning intending to have my hair cut in preparation for a visit to London, and the first letter I opened made it clear I need not go to London. So I decided to put the haircut off too. But then there began the most unaccountable little nagging in my mind, almost like a voice saying, "Get it cut all the same. Go and get it cut." In the end I could stand it no longer. I went. Now my barber at that time was a fellow Christian and a man of many troubles whom my brother and I had sometimes been able to help. The moment I opened his shop door he said, "Oh, I was praying you might come today." And in fact if I had come a day or so later I should have been of no use to him.

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It awed me; it awes me still. But of course one cannot rigorously prove a causal connection between the barber's prayers and my visit. It might be telepathy. It might be accident ...

The question then arises, "What sort of evidence would prove the efficacy of prayer?" The thing we pray for may happen, but how can you ever know it was not going to happen anyway? ...

"God," said Pascal, "instituted prayer in order to lend to His creatures the dignity of causality." But not only prayer; whenever we act at all He lends us that dignity. It is not really stranger, nor less strange, that my prayers should affect the course of events than that my other actions should do so ...

For He seems to do nothing of Himself which He can possibly delegate to His creatures. He commands us to do slowly and blunderingly what He could do perfectly and in the twinkling of an eye. He allows us to neglect what He would have us do, or to fail. Perhaps we do not fully realize the problem, so to call it, of enabling finite free wills to coexist with Omnipotence ... This is how (no light matter) God makes something—indeed, makes gods—out of nothing.

Vol. 203, No. 1, pp. 59–61

Among the Believers

July 1981

BY V. S. NAIPAUL

In 1979, in the midst of the Islamic revolution, the novelist V. S. Naipaul set out for Iran to try to gain an understanding of the Islamic world. Two years later, he chronicled his observations in The Atlantic. *In the passage below, he recalls walking through the city of Tehran with his nonreligious Iranian interpreter, Behzad.*

On the pavement outside the Turkish embassy two turbaned, sunburned medicine men sat with their display of different-colored powders, roots, and minerals. I had seen other medicine men in Tehran and had thought of them as Iranian equivalents of the homeopathic medicine men of India. But the names these Iranians were invoking as medical authorities—as Behzad told me, after listening to their sales talk to a peasant group—were Avicenna, Galen, and "Hippocrat."

Avicenna! To me only a name, someone from the European Middle Ages: it had never occurred to me that he was a Persian. In this dusty pavement medical stock was a reminder of the Arab glory of a thousand years before, when the Arab faith mingled with Persia, India, and the remnant of the classical world it had overrun, and Moslem civilization was the central civilization of the West.

Behzad was less awed than I was. He didn't care for that Moslem past; and he didn't believe in pavement medicines. He didn't care for the Shah's architecture, either: the antique Persian motifs of the Central Bank of Iran, and the Aryan, pre-Islamic past that it proclaimed. To Behzad that stress on the antiquity of Persia and the antiquity of the monarchy was only part of the Shah's vainglory.

He looked at the bank, at the bronze and the marble, and said without passion, "That means nothing to me."

We turned once more, as we walked, to the revolution. There were two posters I had seen in many parts of the city ... One showed a small peasant group ... The other ... a crowd raising rifles ... But what was the Persian legend at the top?

Behzad translated: "'Twelfth Imam, we are waiting for you.'"

"What does that mean?"

"It means they are waiting for the Twelfth Imam."

The Twelfth Imam was the last of the Iranian line of succession to the Prophet. That line had ended over eleven hundred years ago. But the Twelfth Imam hadn't died; he survived somewhere, waiting to return to earth. And his people were waiting for him; the Iranian revolution was an offering to him.

Vol. 248, No. 1, pp. 28–48

Kicking the Secularist Habit

March 2003

BY DAVID BROOKS

A year and a half after 9/11, the columnist David Brooks construed the attacks as proof of the resurgence of religious fervor in modern life.

Like a lot of people these days, I'm a recovering secularist. Until September 11 I accepted the notion that as the world becomes richer and better educated, it becomes less religious. Extrapolating from a tiny and unrepresentative sample of humanity (in Western Europe and parts of North America), this theory holds that as history moves forward, science displaces dogma and reason replaces unthinking obedience. A region that has not yet had a reformation and an enlightenment, such as the Arab world, sooner or later will.

It's now clear that the secularization theory is untrue. The human race does not necessarily get less religious as it grows richer and better educated. We are living through one of the great periods of scientific progress and the creation of wealth. At the same time, we are in the midst of a religious boom.

Islam is surging. Orthodox Judaism is growing among young people, and Israel has gotten more religious as it has become more affluent. The growth of Christianity surpasses that of all other faiths ...

The recovering secularist has to resist the temptation to treat religion as a mere conduit for thwarted economic impulses ... There's obviously some truth to this observation. But it's not the whole story: neither Mohammed Atta nor Osama bin Laden, for example, was poor or oppressed. And although it's possible to construct theories that explain their radicalism as the result of alienation or some other secular factor, it makes more sense to acknowledge that faith is its own force.

Vol. 291, No. 2, pp. 26–28

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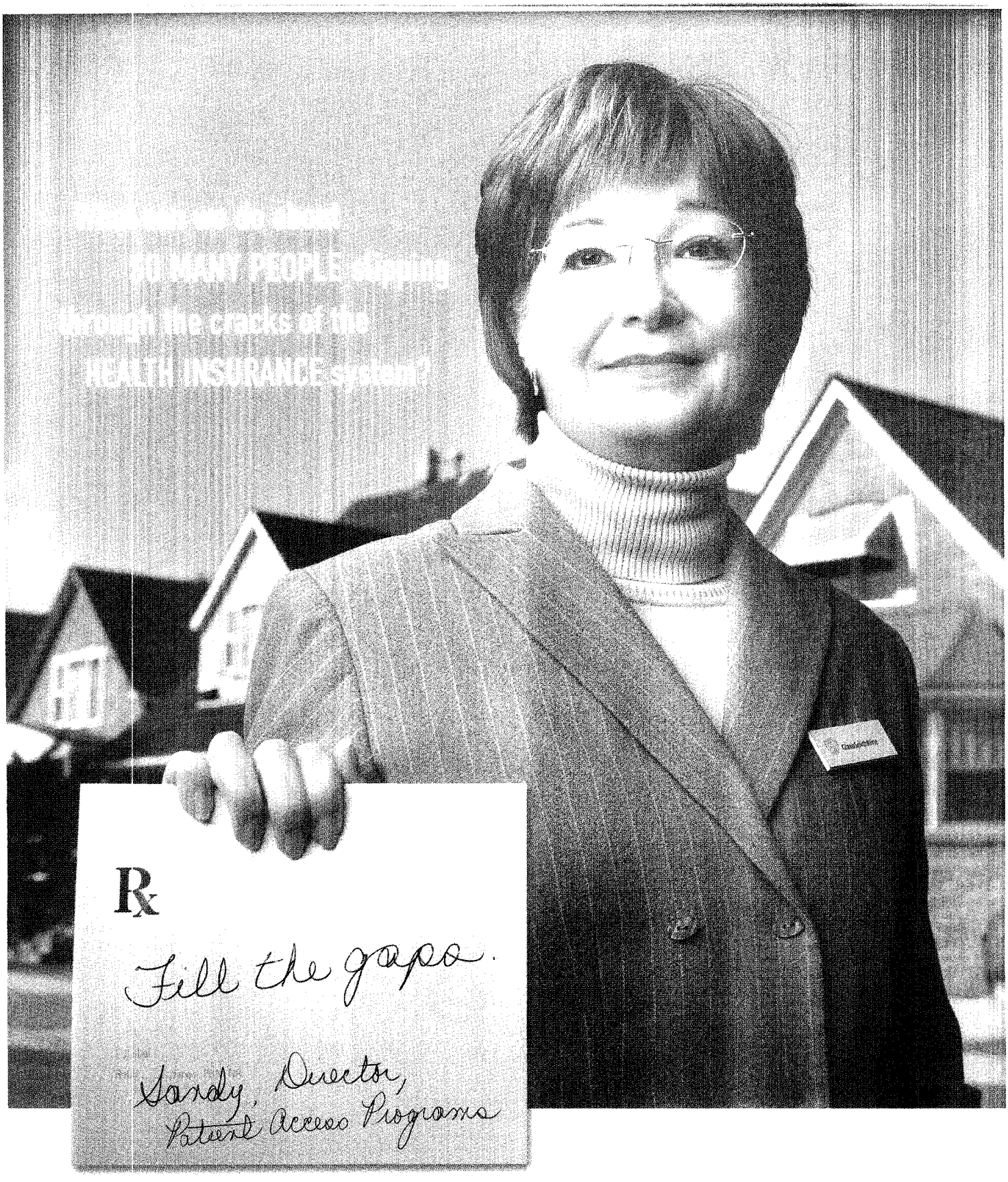

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A kidnapping at a Philippine resort triggered a yearlong hunt for pirate terrorists and their American hostages. A behind-the-scenes tale of intrigue, spycraft, and betrayal

Jihadists in Paradise

BY MARK BOWDEN

I

THE RINGLEADER

The Sulu Sea is a dazzling and distinct maritime domain, a roughly rectangular patch of Pacific Ocean defined by two chains of small islands—the peaks of volcanic ridges—that parallel each other at a distance of about 300 miles, reaching northeast from

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THE ABU SAYYAF: Abu Sabaya (in sunglasses), Khadaffy Janjalani (to his left), and their followers in their jungle hideout, somewhere in the Sulu Archipelago

AP PHOTO/STRINGER

the coastline of Borneo to the main body of the Philippine Islands. Tracing a line along the northwestern end is a long, thin island called Palawan. The southeastern boundary is more punctuated, a chain of nearly a thousand small islands called the Sulu Archipelago. The enclosure creates a kind of oceanic lake, sheltered on all sides from strong currents. Its waters are generally calm and stunningly clear. The conditions are ideal for the formation of reefs, which attract scuba divers from all over the world.

But long before there were such things as recreational diving and vacations in paradise, the Sulu Sea was outlaw territory, a haven for pirates variously called Malay, or Sulu, or Moro—pirates so fierce that for centuries even Western warships gave the area a wide berth. The most infamous of these pirates hailed from the Sulu Archipelago, which is home to the Sama people, notable for their seagoing ways and for their embrace, centuries ago, of Islam. Officially part of the Philippines, the provinces in this region have long been at odds with the nation's larger, primarily Christian collection of islands to the northeast, and for generations guerrilla forces have roamed the triple-canopied jungles of its island interiors. In the latter part of the twentieth century, the guerrilla movement was dominated by the Moro National Liberation Front, a group with a socialist flavor. In 1996 this group reached an accommodation with the Philippine government and became politically legitimate. But the instinct for rebellion runs deep in these islands, and insurrectionists remain; some style themselves not socialists or communists but jihadists.

It was from one of the area's rebel bastions, the island of Basilan, that twenty-one gunmen in military fatigues and long-sleeved black shirts boarded a flat wooden speedboat and embarked on a daring overnight run across the entire 300 miles of the Sulu Sea. The date was May 27, 2001. With three huge outboard motors, the thirty-foot craft was built for velocity, not comfort, bounding at high speed from crest to crest, its flat bottom occasionally slapping down hard in the troughs. The men were all members of a relatively new Islamist faction called the Abu Sayyaf, which roughly translates to "The Bearer of the Sword." They carried machine guns and the traditional long, single-edged machetes known as bolo knives. The larger world was as yet ignorant of their cause—Mohammed Atta was still polishing his flight skills in Florida, three months away from 9/11—but these Filipino guerrillas were already veteran jihadists.

Historically, the Sulu dispute was local, but among the men on this hurtling boat was one with a larger vision. His name was Aldam Tilao, a stocky and gregarious figure with a round face, smooth brown skin, and a receding hairline that he disguised somewhat by shaving his head and topping it with a beret or wrapping it in a black do-rag like an American hip-hop artist. With his single hoop earring and Oakley sunglasses, he affected the look of a Hollywood pirate.

Tilao was not the group's official leader—that was Khadaffy Janjalani, a younger brother of the group's founder (who had been killed by local police in a firefight in 1998).

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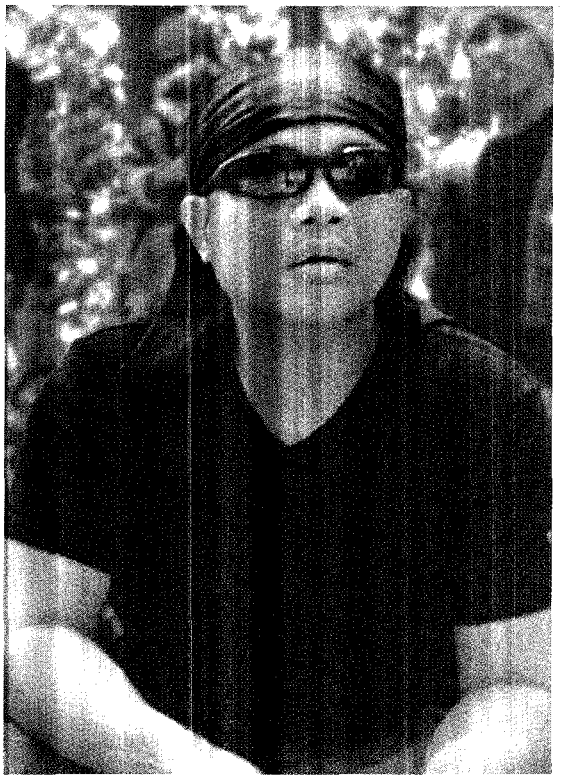

ABU SABAYA in the jungle on Basilan Island

But the younger brother had been eclipsed by the group's most flamboyant recruit. Tilao was a criminal, and to him Islam was just the latest cover for a lifetime of increasingly violent thuggery. Years earlier he had been linked by local police to Moro guerrillas, and was thrown out of Zamboanga College, in Mindanao, where he had studied criminology. If one of his fellow insurrectionists is to be believed, he was even tossed out of an al-Qaeda training camp during the years he spent in the Middle East, in the 1990s. It was during those years in Saudi Arabia and Libya that he began to worship jihadist superstars like Ramzi Yousef and Khalid Sheik Mohammed, who both had briefly set up shop in Manila after Yousef's failed first attempt, in 1993, to destroy the World Trade Center.

Tilao returned to his home islands a middle-aged man. Taking the name Abu Sabaya ("Bearer of Captives"), he began a campaign of kidnapping, rape, and murder, and emerged as the spokesman and most visible face of the Abu Sayyaf movement. Tilao became a frequent voice on the radio in Mindanao, and he apparently so enjoyed this public persona that he nicknamed himself "DJ," embroidering the initials on his backpack. His brazen insouciance and sense of style tapped a universal vein of teenage rebellion, which gave the group, despite its shocking cruelty, a hip, antiestablishment feel. Tilao's ambition was nothing less than to become the premier southern franchise of global jihad.

MORE ON THEATLANTIC.COM
See www.theatlantic.com/sayyaf for an interview with Mark Bowden and video clips of many of the major players in this story.

His target that spring morning was Amanpulo, the most expensive diving resort on the southern coast of Palawan, where he and the others hoped to harvest a crop of wealthy foreign hostages. They would extort large ransom payments from the victims' families and employers, and shatter the friendly calm vital to the Philippine tourism industry. Palawan was considered completely safe. The trouble in recent years had been confined for the most part to the southern islands. This thrust across the Sulu Sea was a bold move by Abu Sayyaf, and something of a stretch. Indeed, when Tilao and his men arrived in the unfamiliar waters off Palawan, in the predawn darkness, they got lost. The plan called for them to strike before sunrise and set off on the long return trip while it was still dark. But with dawn rapidly approaching, they grabbed several local night fishermen off their boats and pressed them into service as guides. Abandoning their primary goal, the raiders settled for a resort called Dos Palmas. It was built on a tiny island just off the coast, where visitors could stay in the bay area in little white cottages on stilts above the water.

Among the nearly twenty guests asleep in the bay cottages that morning were three Americans: Guillermo Sobero, a naturalized citizen from Peru who ran a waterproofing business in Corona, California; and a Baptist missionary couple, Martin and Gracia Burnham, who worked for the New Tribes Mission, a global evangelical group. Martin Burnham was a pilot, and his wife worked as his ground support. They were celebrating their eighteenth wedding anniversary, having left their three children with friends in Manila. Sobero's wife (whom he was divorcing) and his four children were back in the States. He had told them he was celebrating his fortieth birthday with relatives at a resort in Arizona. Instead, he was halfway around the world, sharing a cottage with his young Filipino girlfriend, Fe.

The guerrillas raided the resort before dawn, first capturing the two guards and then moving from cottage to cottage, banging on doors and kicking them in if they were not answered quickly enough. Martin Burnham put on a pair of khaki cargo shorts and opened the door to his room. Gunmen seized him and took him away. Gracia managed to pull on shorts and a T-shirt and grab flip-flops for herself and her husband before being dragged out behind him, as other gunmen raided the minibar for food. All told the kidnappers took away twenty people, including the guards and a cook. The vacationers turned out to be mostly Chinese Filipinos, and when the raiders learned that two of their three American hostages were missionaries, they were deeply disappointed. The missions were generally poor, savvy, and fatalistic, notoriously unwilling to pay ransom. With their captives huddled on the boat under a tarp against the blazing midday sun, the kidnappers headed southeast toward Basilan.

They would need five days and four nights to complete the return voyage. They miscalculated their fuel needs, and when they ran low on gas they hijacked a fishing vessel and set their flat wooden boat adrift; the Philippine marines eventually recovered it. As Gracia Burnham recounts in her memoir, *In the Presence of My Enemies*, the hostages

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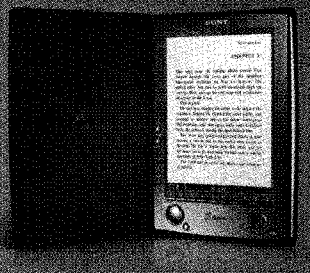

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sang Disney tunes and Beatles songs to maintain morale, in between their captors' harangues about Islam. Despite their frightening situation, they marveled at the beauty of the sea around them. Dolphins raced alongside the boat, dodging under its outriggers and occasionally leaping high out of the clear blue water. A tarp-enclosed platform was erected off one side of the boat for the women to use as a bathroom. Martin Burnham, handy with tools, made himself useful to his captors, even showing them how to strap together D batteries to recharge their satellite phone, which seemed particularly important to Tilao. He had the captives use it to call family and friends and implore them to pay ransom, and he used it himself to call a radio station in Mindanao and proudly announce his crime.

"The government only listens when we take people," he said. "Well, I'll admit we took those hostages. If [the government] wants to negotiate, it's up to them." He also warned, "Now that we have three Americans, you should not take us for granted." He then put Martin Burnham on the line:

"Hi, my name is Mr. Martin Burnham. I am a United States citizen. I am a missionary ... I along with my wife Gracia are in the custody of the Abu Sayyaf, Khadaffy Janjalani's group. We are safe; we are unharmed. Our needs are being met ... We are appealing for a safe negotiation. They are treating us well."

Tilao had wanted Burnham to also identify his kidnappers as "the Osama bin Laden Group," but Burnham was unfamiliar with that name and stuck with the more familiar local appellation.

Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, who had been in office for only a few months, quickly dashed any hopes that she would adopt a conciliatory approach toward Abu Sayyaf. "I will finish what you started," she pledged. "Force against force. Arms against arms. This is what the challenge you hurled against me calls for. I will oblige you."

On the fifth night, the kidnappers and their captives slipped off the boat into the warm, chest-high water off Basilan and walked ashore through the lazy lapping of the tide. Behind them, the spotlights of fishing vessels dotted the horizon. Islanders lived along the shoreline, but like these guerrillas, they knew how to move inland along narrow trails that pushed uphill into the black jungle. By straying just ten feet, a person could vanish into the dense vegetation.

II
THE COLONEL

Over the next year and a half, Aldam Tilao would in fact be hunted down and cornered, in a Philippine military operation that involved the CIA and the American military. Eliminating him was a small, early success in what the Bush administration calls the "global war on terror"; but in the shadow of efforts like the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, it went largely unnoticed. As a model for the long-term fight against militant Islam, however, the hunt for Tilao is better than either of those larger engagements. Because the enemy consists of small cells operating independently all over the globe, success depends on local intelligence and American assistance subtle enough to avoid charges of imperialism or meddling, charges that often provoke a backlash and feed the movement.

The United States would play a crucial but almost invisible role in finding and killing Tilao, enlisting the remarkable skills of the Philippine marine corps for the most important ground work, and supplying money, equipment, and just enough quiet technological help to close in for the last act. Such an approach does present problems; the Philippine operation exposed some of the legal, logistical, and moral challenges of this kind of work. For one thing, the Americans worked hand in hand with Philippine forces who almost certainly murdered people standing in the way of their intelligence operation.

Before 9/11, the larger world was as yet ignorant of Tilao's cause—but his ambition was nothing less than to become the premier southern franchise of global jihad.

At the time of the Dos Palmas raid, Colonel Juancho Sabban, the deputy commander of southern operations for the Philippine marine corps, was in Hawaii beginning an advanced officer training course offered by the U.S. Department of Defense. On the first day of classes, the attendees from military forces around the Pacific took turns introducing themselves. Sabban—a thickset brown-skinned man in his forties with short-cropped black hair, full lips, big teeth, and a bull neck—spoke at some length. He dwelled particularly on Palawan, where he had been based for part of his career, and which he considered to be heaven on earth. So when he received a first report of the kidnapping, he expressed disbelief: Palawan was much too far away from Abu Sayyaf's territory; the movement lacked the means to strike at the far side of the Sulu Sea. When the details were confirmed, he was embarrassed, but he was also impressed by what the guerrillas had pulled off.

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Meanwhile, Abu Sayyaf was tying the Philippine armed forces in knots. The army conducted raids all over Basilan but was always one step behind. The island's 500 square miles are mostly jungle, and its people have a long tradition of supporting rebels. Abu Sayyaf found moving and evading relatively easy. Tilao paused now and then to give cocky, even cheerful, radio interviews. From the midst of one firefight, with gunfire popping in the background, he fielded questions from the Radio Mindanao Network.

Where are the hostages? he was asked.

"I don't know," he said. "I'm not with the captives. I'm a hundred meters away from them ... We have thirty hostages now. We abducted ten fishermen when we left Palawan ... So we can't be blamed now if we make good what we said earlier, that we will execute the hostages one by one. It's up to you."

There was a burst of gunfire.

"Perhaps Gloria [the Philippine president] thinks we can be frightened," he said. "We'll keep adding hostages, even if they reach a thousand."

Tilao went on to say that trigger-happy government forces were killing off the hostages faster than he and his men were. "The military thought that the hostages were our comrades, so two of them were killed. But I can't tell you their nationalities nor identities. What we will do now, perhaps today, we will [have] executions, but we cannot tell how many and at what time."

The Philippine army did seem more intent on killing guerrillas than on rescuing hostages. The captives were dragged from hidden camp to hidden camp all over the island that summer, as the rebels engaged in frequent shoot-outs with their pursuers. Martin Burnham and Guillermo Sobero had both been wounded in one such clash; Burnham had taken a stinging spray of shrapnel to his back, and Sobero was hit in the foot, which made it increasingly difficult for him to keep up. To distract and throw off government forces, Abu Sayyaf operatives conducted numerous raids, including one at a coconut plantation called Golden Harvest; they took about fifteen people captive there and later used bolo knives to hack the heads off two men. The number of hostages waxed and waned as some were ransomed and released, new ones were taken, and others were killed.

One victim, in early June, was Sobero. He had irritated his captors from the beginning, partly because of his disregard for their outward show of Islamic piety. He would, for instance, remove his shirt in the oppressive heat, exposing his arms and torso in a way they considered "un-Islamic." They also coveted his young girlfriend. One day several of the guerrillas marched him off into the jungle after telling him, "Someone wants to see you." Sobero had tossed his shirt to Gracia Burnham and asked her to keep an eye on his backpack until he returned. He never did.

Tilao turned the American's execution into a joke. In another of his frequent radio interviews, he announced, "As a gift to the country on its Independence Day, we have released unconditionally Guillermo Sobero." Then he paused, and added: "But we have released him without his head. It's up to you to find Sobero's head ... but the dogs may beat you to it."

Trudging behind their captors, the missionary couple endured. They focused on staying alive, attending to basic bodily needs—eating, sleeping, staying clean. No strangers to religious conviction, the Burnhams gently engaged their captors in theological discussion and found these jihadists to be shallow, even adolescent, in their faith. Unfamiliar with the Koran, the outlaws had only a sketchy notion of Islam, which they saw as a set of behavioral rules, to be violated when it suited them. Kidnapping, murder, and theft were justified by their special status as "holy warriors." One by one they sexually appropriated several of the women captives, claiming them as "wives."

Despite Sobero's murder and the Burnhams' continuing ordeal, the American government and the American public were largely indifferent. In this pre–9/11 era, the matter was regarded as a typical Third World outrage, the kind of nightmare often faced by missionaries in dangerous places. The official U.S. response was limited to occasional comments from the embassy in Manila, condemning the crime and demanding the hostages' release. Despite a policy of refusing to negotiate with terrorists, the FBI would eventually be involved in a futile attempt to ransom the couple, losing $300,000 in the process. The money is believed to have been stolen by elements within the Philippine police.

After 9/11, everything changed. No longer was Abu Sayyaf just an obscure group of kidnappers; it was now a regional arm of the international Islamist menace. The fate of Sobero and the Burnhams was suddenly on the lips of powerful people in Washington. During a White House meeting with Philippine President Arroyo, President Bush said the United States was prepared to help "in any way she suggests." Given the ham-handed efforts of the Philippine army to that point, she was clearly in the market for new tactics. Tilao continued to taunt Philippine authorities in frequent radio interviews from his satellite phone.

In the fall of 2001, Colonel Sabban returned from his sabbatical and was put in charge of the Philippine marine intelligence operation targeting Abu Sayyaf. Sabban is a charismatic man, popular, tough, and highly regarded within the marine corps, an elite group so cohesive that at times its members have seemed more faithful to one another than to the government. As a young officer in 1989, Sabban himself had been arrested and imprisoned for following his leaders in a failed coup against then-President Corazon Aquino. Many of the officers caught

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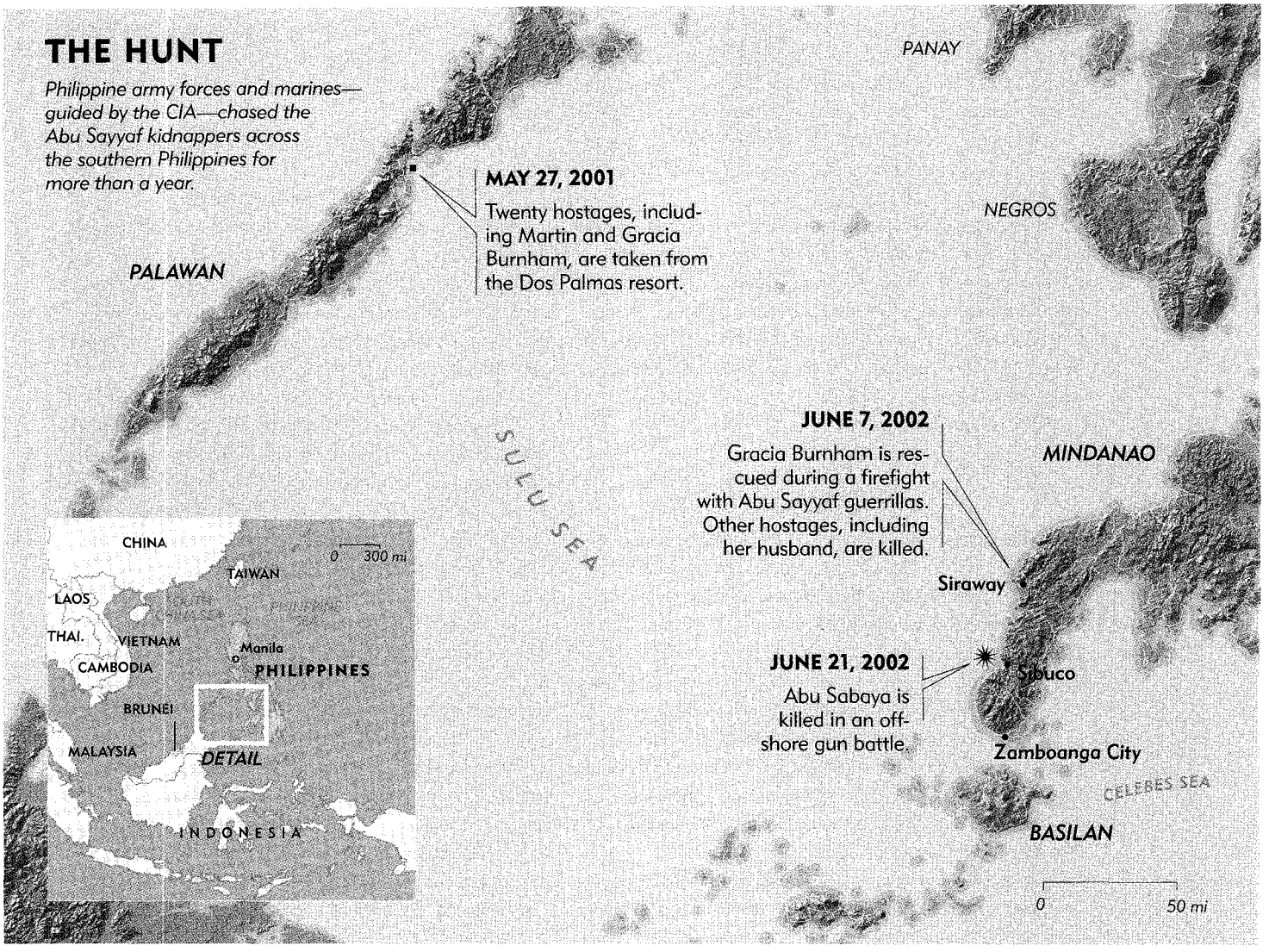

MAP BY RYAN MORRIS

up in that plot were absolved and reinstated years later, their involvement seen as motivated less by politics than by unit loyalty. The colonel's career hadn't suffered. If anything, his rebel past added to his luster as a man to be reckoned with. He knew the southern islands well, and he had what he called "assets in place."

The marines ran an old-fashioned intelligence operation. They did not have a budget to rival the army's, and they had none of the technological wizardry of the Americans, who were deploying to the Philippines that summer for joint military exercises, but they had smart, trustworthy corpsmen who spoke the local languages without accent and were plugged into the islands' families and clans.

Early on, the colonel made Tilao the primary target, and noted two obvious weaknesses. The first was his love of attention, his need to boast of his exploits on the airwaves; there had to be a way to take advantage of that. The second was his local roots. He had been born in Malamawi, a little island just off Basilan, where he still had friends and extended family. It was a small, small world, and Tilao had become a very big fish. He had been an outgoing attention seeker all his life, so he had left a larger circle of connections than most others in his shadowy organization, a circle stretching from Malamawi to Basilan and beyond. Sabban's undercover agents began mapping Tilao's connections, identifying family members, old friends, teachers, schoolmates. Then they fanned out, acting as undercover "spotters" to make informal contact. They would strike up conversations with targets, pretending to vaguely remember Tilao from school, or perhaps just to have read about him in the newspaper or heard his voice on the radio. They began to learn things; Tilao had been less guarded than he should have been. People had received letters, some with requests for supplies. The spotters were able to discover who had delivered them. The couriers were then followed, and fresh letters were intercepted and copied. Sabban's men were careful not to disturb the web; they were content to patiently gather information.

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One thing the colonel learned was that a prominent tennis pro on Basilan sometimes played with a man who claimed to have been Tilao's closest childhood friend. The friend's name was Alvin Siglos, and there was something very important about him beyond his lifelong connection with Tilao, something that the guerrilla himself did not know.

Being a terrorist often means killing strangers to make a political point, and in terrorist eyes, such deaths have no meaning beyond the political one. But in the Abu Sayyaf's brutal attack on the Golden Harvest plantation, four of the plantation workers the terrorists had marched off into the jungle were cousins of Alvin Siglos. And one of the two men killed was his uncle.

Sabban had his ticket to Tilao.

III
THE INFORMER

Squat, dark, and powerful, Alvin Siglos had been the leader of a rambunctious gang at Basilan High School three decades earlier. The boys hung together constantly, playing sports during the day and gathering to raise hell at night. Siglos was the soccer team's captain and best player, and Tilao was a pugnacious defenseman. Reckless and fun-loving, Tilao seemed as far from serious thought about politics or religion as a young man could be. He skipped classes and got in trouble for fighting. His father was an honorable, pious Muslim, but Tilao was not. He and the other boys liked girls, and they liked to drink, gamble, and fight.

Siglos had not strayed far from home or from his youthful pursuits. Sabban found him living in Zamboanga City, a sprawling metropolis just a short boat ride from Basilan at the southwestern end of the large island of Mindanao. He was a cheerful, garrulous man with uneven skin, thick black hair, and a wide face with narrow dark eyes set wide apart. He didn't look like an athlete, but he was a star in the local softball leagues and was considered one of the city's best tennis players. He had little education and no interest in religion or politics. He worked only when the need was strong and a suitable opportunity presented itself; he was the kind of man who lived off hustle and charm. He was also an enthusiastic gambler, wagering heavily on the hugely popular Zamboanga cockfights. He knew that his old high-school friend had moved to Saudi Arabia years earlier, and he'd learned only by accident that Tilao was back in the Philippines: One day in 2000 he heard someone sounding like Tilao boasting on the radio, though the voice had been identified as belonging to someone named "Abu Sabaya." He was curious enough to ask one of Tilao's cousins, and was told that his old soccer buddy was now the most notorious jihadist in the Philippines. Siglos began boasting that he was the outlaw's "best friend."

Months later, word apparently reached Tilao that his old friend had been talking up their relationship, and out of the blue the terrorist leader surprised Siglos with a phone call.

"Are there lots of millionaires there in Zamboanga City to kidnap?" he asked.

"No," Siglos told him. "We are all poor."

Another surprise call came after the Dos Palmas kidnapping, and this time Tilao wanted help. He asked Siglos if he had a bank account. He was looking for someone he could trust, someone outside known Abu Sayyaf circles, to collect and hold ransom money. Siglos said he had never had enough money to need a bank.

"I will call you again," Tilao promised.

These furtive contacts with his friend on the run were thrilling for Siglos, and at first he didn't waste much time thinking about the nature of the Abu Sayyaf's crimes, or about its victims. Their childhood friendship transcended such abstract considerations, and he was inclined to help Tilao if he could. Then came the Golden Harvest kidnapping. What Tilao was doing no longer seemed so abstract.

It was at this moment that Siglos was first contacted by an operative of Colonel Sabban's. The marine asked Siglos if he wanted to work as an "action agent." Apart from the pay he would receive, the Philippine government was offering a $100,000 reward for information leading to Tilao's capture or death. (The Americans would later put up a reward of $5 million. Tilao scoffed at the local reward, which he considered too small, but was proud of the American one.) At some level Siglos still loved his old friend; and he would later see that Tilao still trusted him. But as Siglos figured it, not even their mutual friends could fault him for informing on the outlaw. Nor could they accuse him of selling out his friend for money: Blood was thicker than friendship. Revenge weighed heavily on the scale. Siglos was so eager to cooperate that the marine intelligence unit was at first taken aback.

Captain Gieram Aragones was unimpressed after the initial interview. He didn't trust Siglos. A wiry man with pale skin, Asian eyes, and the nickname "Bong," Aragones was obsessed with getting Tilao. It was the most important job he had been given, and apart from his ambition and professional pride, he found the Abu Sayyaf personally offensive, and Tilao particularly so. The son of a marine chaplain and a graduate of the Philippine naval academy, Aragones was a convert to Islam. He had taken well to undercover intelligence work, immersing himself totally in the culture and languages of Sulu province. To him, Abu Sayyaf was an illegitimate political movement and a bogus religious one. Tilao and the other jihadists gave his adopted religion a bad name. As an outward symbol of his determination, Aragones announced to his men that he would neither cut his hair nor shave until Tilao was either in custody or dead.

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Siglos was a potentially important avenue to Tilao, but Aragones judged that anyone who talked so much and displayed such transparent lust for reward money was dangerous. The would-be informant boasted that he had worked many times as an undercover agent for the Philippine organized-crime task force, but his claims didn't check out. Aragones saw him as a blowhard and an opportunist. Before putting Siglos on the payroll as an action agent, Aragones recommended to Colonel Sabban that the recruit be put to a test.

IV
THE REPORTER

Colonel Sabban, as it happened, had exactly the same thing in mind. He'd been looking for a way to exploit Tilao's vanity and obsession with publicity, and he had a friend who would be perfect for the job, a remarkable and daring young journalist named Arlyn dela Cruz.

Arlyn dela Cruz was a well-known TV personality, short and slender with long dark hair, big eyes, and full lips, very articulate and very ambitious. Her success as a journalist had been so sensational that it had brought personal and professional problems. In 1993, as a rookie reporter, she had been assigned, much to her surprise, to try to interview members of the Abu Sayyaf, after they kidnapped Fr. Bernardo Blanco, a Spanish missionary. Not only did dela Cruz get an exclusive interview with the group's leaders; at least one of them, Khadaffy Janjalani, took a shine to her. Over the next few years she repeatedly visited jungle hideouts, bringing back scoop after scoop—videotapes and notes of exclusive interviews with Abu Sayyaf's notorious leaders. Tilao was among those leaders, and he had greeted her in the jungle camp like an old acquaintance, a fellow celebrity. This struck her as so odd that she had asked Janjalani about him. He explained that Tilao had essentially appointed himself the group's spokesman: "He likes to talk."

Intelligence agents disappointed by her unwillingness to share information spread false rumors about dela Cruz—that she was having an affair with Janjalani, that her husband was somehow related to the rebel leader. On one occasion, while working as an independent journalist, she sold the videotape of an interview to a TV station for broadcast, and her rivals denounced her as a mercenary. The backbiting took such a toll on her personally and professionally that she resolved to stop covering Abu Sayyaf altogether. So when Tilao began calling, offering an interview after the Dos Palmas kidnappings, she turned him down.

She continued to refuse interview opportunities until Bob Meisel, the head of the New Tribes Mission office in Manila, personally implored her to get involved. He explained that official efforts had not borne fruit, and that after all these months the Burnhams' family and friends were eager for any contact at all. Moved by Meisel's pleas, dela Cruz began looking for a way to arrange a visit with Tilao and the captive missionaries. In November she flew down to Zamboanga City.

Colonel Sabban's men had been watching dela Cruz for weeks. When she arrived in Zamboanga, they tailed her. Much to their surprise, within days she led them to Alvin Siglos. The colonel called her. "We know what you're up to," he said. Dela Cruz was not surprised; she was used to playing games with the various government intelligence units. Sometimes they used her, and sometimes she used them. Often their goals coincided. Sabban did not inform her at this point that his own team had been talking to Siglos. "Go ahead and keep on doing what you're doing," he told her. He said that if she and the informant went up into the Basilan jungle, he would make sure they would not be delayed at any of the military checkpoints along the way.

ABU SABAYA, with Martin Burnham and Gracia Burnham in a hideout on Basilan, several weeks after he'd kidnapped them

REUTERS/STRINGER PHILIPPINES

The venture would provide exactly the test of Siglos the marines wanted. If he could take the reporter to meet with Tilao and bring her back safely, it would demonstrate that he had the access he claimed to have. Debriefing him later would give them a better fix on where the guerrillas were, how numerous, and how well armed. It might even allow the marines to set up an ambush immediately afterward. Further, a videotaped interview might provide "proof of life," showing that the Burnhams were indeed alive and giving some indication of their condition.

The trip into the jungle took two days. The reporter and the informer sailed through the military checkpoints, as the colonel had promised, and set off on foot into the jungle. They walked for about two hours, guided by a villager. Dela Cruz wore a blue sweatshirt and khaki pants, and carried a small digital video camera. She and Siglos were eventually met by about a dozen guerrilla fighters in a little clearing. Leading them was Tilao, looking thinner

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than usual after his months on the run, but still wearing his trademark sunglasses and black head wrap, dressed in a long-sleeved black shirt and army fatigue pants, with a rifle over one shoulder and a pistol strapped to his hip.

Tilao and Siglos embraced, laughing and crying, delighted to see each other again. "Auntie and Uncle will meet you tomorrow," Tilao told dela Cruz, referring to the American captives. Then he and Siglos walked off together to talk. Sitting that evening with Tilao's men, dela Cruz could hear the two friends talking animatedly well into the night, sometimes laughing boisterously, sometimes talking quietly for long periods. They spoke to each other in a local dialect that she didn't understand. When dela Cruz awakened the next morning, the two were still talking, and she lay on the ground listening to them telling stories and laughing.

Later that day, Tilao produced the Burnhams. Both of them looked emaciated. Martin's beard had come in thick and red, redder than the thin, sandy hair on the sides of his head. His cheeks and eye sockets were hollow, and his neck appeared long and very thin. His worn clothing hung on him. Gracia was similarly wan, her face lined and her eyes puffy. She smiled warmly and then quietly wept when she was introduced to dela Cruz and Siglos. Gracia was amazed that a reporter had found them in the jungle—but why a reporter and not a rescue force?

They spoke for more than an hour, the meeting recorded on videotape. Martin seemed matter-of-fact about their predicament, even resigned to it. He was poised, in firm control of his emotions. He talked about his determination to return home to his children. Gracia's pain was closer to the surface, as was her anger. She spoke of her fear of being executed, her expectation of death. Most of Gracia's anger was directed at the Philippine government.

They parted later that day. Dela Cruz hugged Gracia and Martin, promising to carry their message to their children, to their friends, and to the world. Tilao and Siglos choked up on parting. Dela Cruz and Siglos were then led away, and after a surprisingly short walk down the mountain, they arrived at a military outpost. Soon after dela Cruz's return to Manila, her interview aired all over the Philippines and around the world.

Sabban and Aragones were heartened: Siglos had delivered exactly what he had promised. After debriefing him and dela Cruz, and watching the videos, the two marines determined approximately where Tilao and his men must be living on the island. But the Philippine army refused to allow the marines to conduct a rapid raid in pursuit. Sabban's efficiency had embarrassed the army, and it wasn't about to let the marines close out the mission. Instead, the army decided to pluck Tilao all by itself. Philippine army troops descended in force on Tilao's hideout, and found no one.

Tilao and the captives had vanished.

V

THE SPECIAL AGENT

Outside the small world of military intelligence, Colonel Sabban's success was perceived as failure: a mere journalist had walked into the Basilan jungle and scored an interview with a man the Philippine armed forces somehow couldn't find. But within intelligence circles it was a different matter. Sabban's small unit had accomplished more than all the rest of the Philippine military: It had not only found Tilao; it had also secured, in Alvin Siglos, a direct line to the guerrilla leader.

Other military and police intel units began vying for the services of this new action agent, and Sabban had to use all his clout to fend them off. In secret reports about the operation in Manila, the marine intelligence group was identified only as "MC-2." When American embassy officials began inquiring about MC-2, they were told at first that no such group existed. This was apparently an honest mistake, because no one at the highest levels of the Philippine government had ever heard of it. But contact was finally made, and Colonel Sabban was suddenly awash in offers of help, from both the CIA and U.S. military intelligence.

In short order he was dealing with the complexities of America's military-intelligence bureaucracy, and being amazed by how strictly the Americans followed their rules. He discovered, for instance, that there were things that one agency could deliver that another could not. For military equipment and ammunition, it was best to ask the military-intelligence folks, who were also permitted by the U.S. government to share "lethal information"—intelligence that might lead to a target's death. For technology and money, he learned, it was best to approach the CIA. Unlike military intel, the CIA had deep pockets. The agency was barred, however, from directly sharing lethal information.

Sabban's primary American contact was a bald, trig dynamo named Kent Clizbee, a CIA officer who showed up in Zamboanga City raring to go. The term *gung-ho* was inadequate to describe this big, pale, muscular American. He was nothing like the conventional image of the retiring, blend-into-the-background spy. Looming over his new Filipino collaborators, dressed in a T-shirt, shorts, and hiking boots, he looked like an American tourist who had taken a wrong turn. But Clizbee was an expert in Southeast Asian languages and cultures. When Sabban invited him along on a strenuous uphill hike for some exercise one afternoon, Clizbee, a U.S. Special Forces vet, earned any marine's deepest measure of respect by easily keeping pace. He was the perfect ally. He wanted no credit. He didn't want to plan or run the operation. He was a good listener.

"What do you need?" he asked Sabban. One of the first things the CIA provided was money to buy a new satellite

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phone—for Tilao. The guerrilla had asked Siglos to get one for him; his own had either broken down or been lost, and he'd been using his cell phone to make calls out of the jungle. There were several cell-phone towers on Basilan, but service was poor. The colonel wanted Tilao to have a satellite phone, because it facilitated the kidnapper's vital link with Siglos, and with the help of the CIA, it potentially meant being able to pinpoint his location. Siglos bought the phone at a store in Zamboanga; the marines recorded its serial number, and then Siglos passed it along to the couriers who would take it into the jungle with the groceries Tilao had requested—also purchased with money from the CIA. Tilao later called Siglos on the satellite phone and confirmed that he had received the goods, and he even put his captives on the phone—"Uncle and Auntie want to talk to you," he said. Siglos recorded the call, as instructed, and collected $500 for his work.

Other units and agencies, Philippine and American, with an interest in pursuing Tilao were suspicious of Siglos. The FBI, which regarded all Philippine efforts as untrustworthy, wanted to pick him up as a suspected Abu Sayyaf member. But the truth was that Siglos was fully committed to taking Tilao down. The knowledge that he was betraying his friend pained him from time to time, but once he started down that road he never seriously considered turning back. The way he saw it, Tilao would be arrested and sent to jail, the hostages would be set free, and he would collect the reward money. He would avenge the murder of his uncle and get rich, which seemed a fair outcome to him.

With the Tilao-Siglos connection authenticated, the marines set about making it exclusive. They had been intercepting the terrorist's letters and phone calls for months, and knew that he had other connections in Zamboanga who served the same purpose as Siglos, sending groceries and supplies. These other contacts began meeting with unfortunate accidents. They were eliminated one by one, until, by early 2002, Tilao had only one avenue for his requests.

And Siglos was a bountiful provider. The CIA arranged things to look as if he was getting money secretly from local political figures sympathetic to the guerrillas, and virtually everything Tilao asked for was promptly delivered. His steady stream of requests included many from Martin and Gracia Burnham, who saw the sudden bounty as an answer to her prayers. At times in the previous months, Martin had hoarded cookie and candy wrappers so that he could simply smell them to ease his hunger pangs. Gracia had prayed for such items as sanitary napkins, a Scrabble game, Nestea, Bisquick, peanut butter, and even hamburgers, and the CIA began seeing to it that these very specific prayers were answered. When Tilao asked for a backpack, the CIA had one prepared with a tracking device sewn into the fabric. Its signals were of no use at first, however, because the agency had to wait for the war in Afghanistan to end before it could get aircraft—manned and unmanned—to track them.

For most of early 2002, thanks to the CIA, the marines had at least a periodic fix on the meandering guerrilla band. When Tilao boasted in radio interviews—saying, for instance, "It's really an embarrassment [to the authorities], because the superpower can't do anything to us"—he was doing so on a CIA-supplied satellite phone, which gave away his position as he spoke.

The only hitch was that the spy agency was not allowed to relay the precise coordinates—in part to cloak the capabilities of the CIA's equipment, in part because the agency had not been given a "lethal finding"—permission to pass along potentially lethal information. When its agents on the ground pressed, their request triggered an argument in Washington. The Pentagon wanted the precise coordinates turned over to Philippine forces, but the CIA refused, instructing its agents to give Sabban and his men only a five-mile radius.

"As a gift to the country on its Independence Day, we have released unconditionally Guillermo Sobero." Tilao paused. "But we have released him without his head."

The marines had other troubles. Every time Colonel Sabban requested permission to send a small force of his men under Captain Aragones into the jungle to find the Burnhams and deal with Tilao, the lumbering Philippine army insisted on doing the work itself, sometimes sending whole battalions after the nimble guerrillas. Although it had only general coordinates, the army did come close several times. Abu Sayyaf lost men in these skirmishes. Tilao and his group were feeling enough heat that in early April they slipped off Basilan in a small boat. By now, all of the hostages had been ransomed or abandoned but three: the Burnhams and a Filipino nurse. They made their way across the short passage to the Zamboanga Peninsula, stopped briefly at a small island, and then moved to a fishing village just north of Zamboanga City.

In the days afterward, the guerrillas seemed to have vanished, but then, just as suddenly, they reappeared. Tilao began calling Siglos from his cell phone—service

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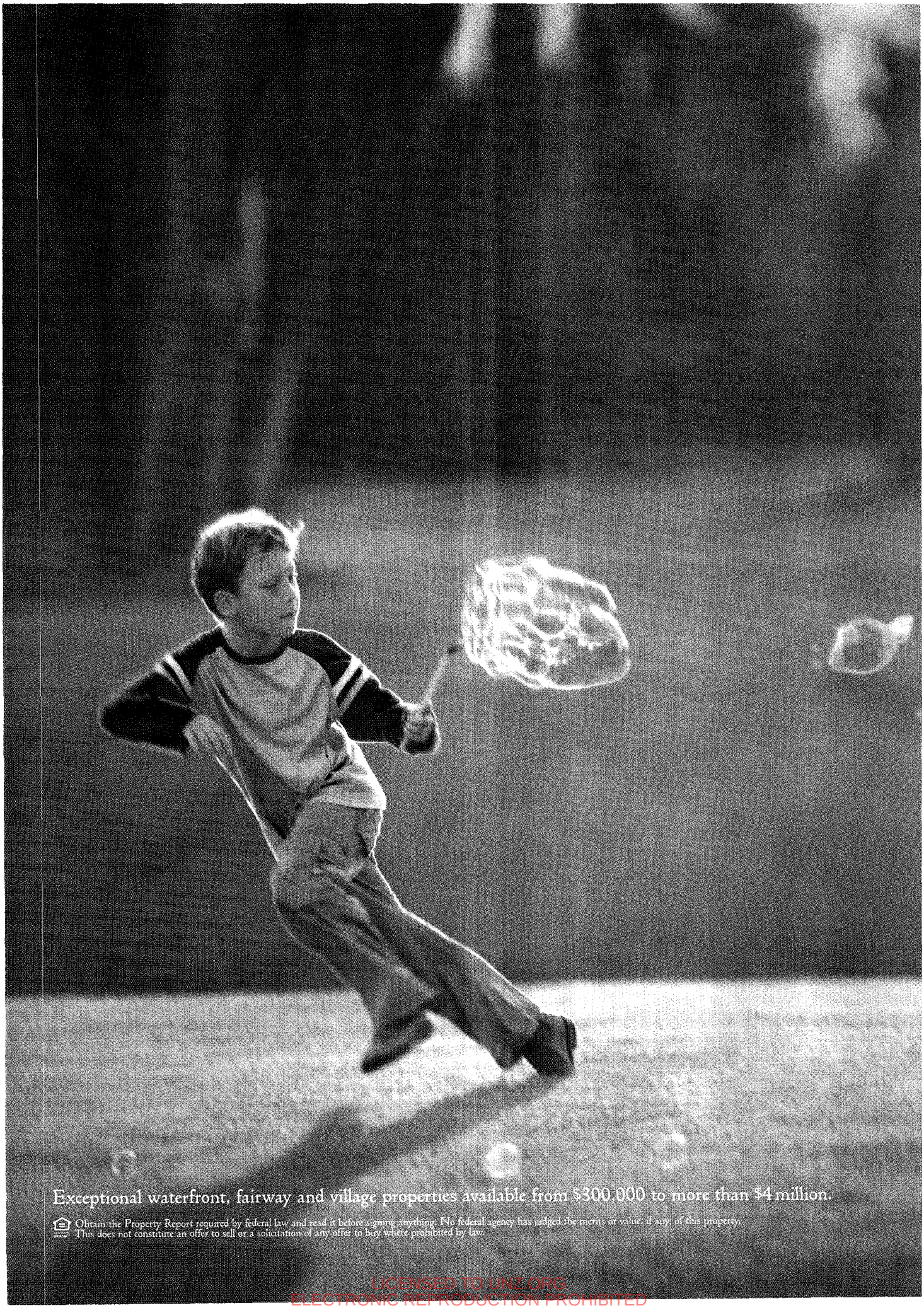

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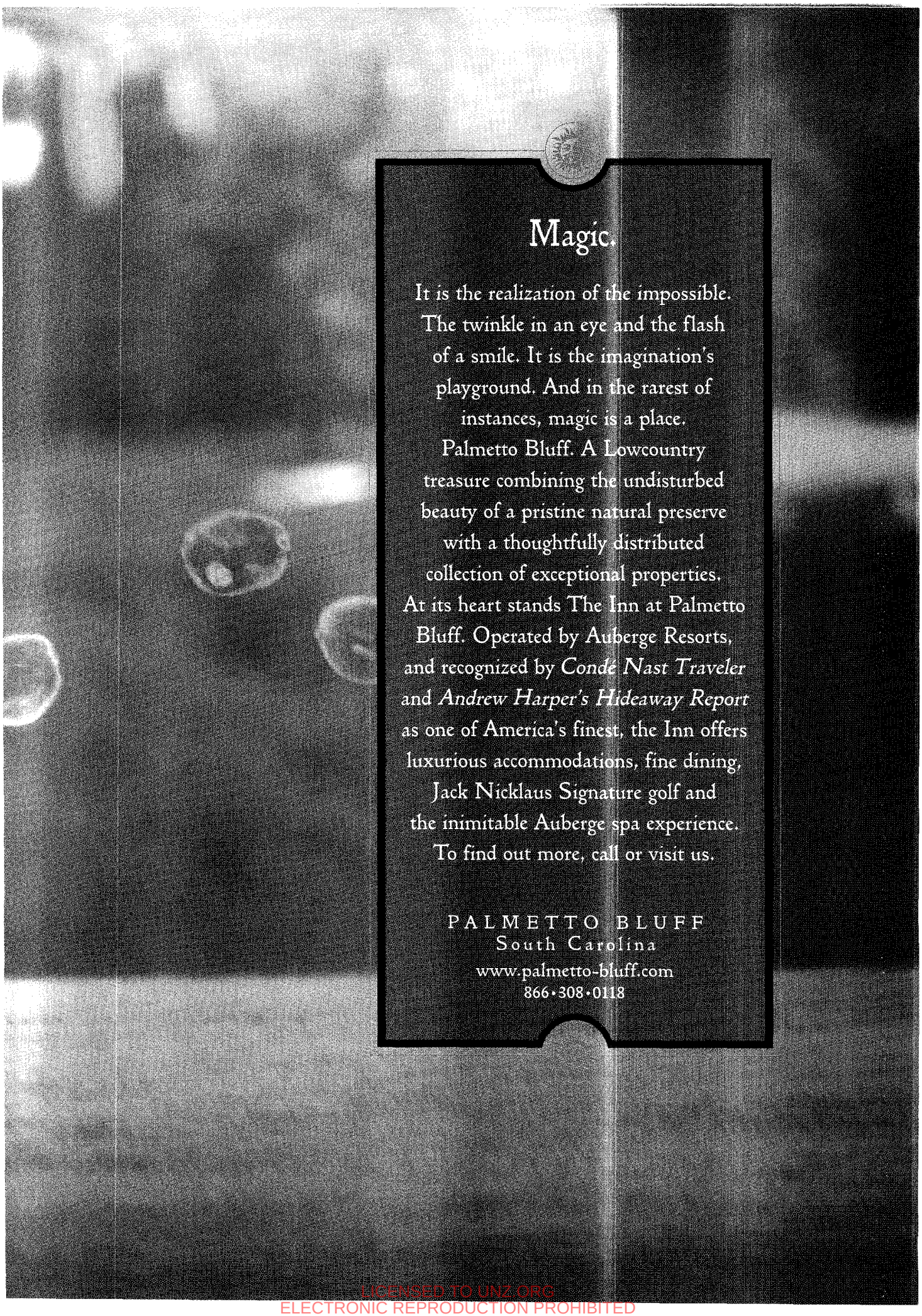

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was reliable in Zamboanga City so he did not need to use the satellite phone. U.S. and Philippine intelligence could not get the same precise fix on his position that they had gotten from the satellite phone, but by now they had something even better: aircraft.

VI
THE RESCUE

In moments of despair, Gracia Burnham told her husband she would rather be dead than continue running with their kidnappers. Martin reminded her of their children: "What do you think the kids would say if you could pick up the phone and call them?" Gracia was haunted by their vow to grow old together—it was happening; they were both so haggard, they seemed to have aged forty years. Martin's weight loss was aggravated by such intense diarrhea that when he was chained to a tree each night, he tied rags between his legs to catch the flow. His ribs were showing through his T-shirts.

After a short stay in the fishing village, the band moved off into the jungle north of the city. Here the guerrillas, no longer on familiar or friendly ground, had to be concerned about being seen, even by villagers. They could not let the Burnhams be seen, so the couple were no longer allowed to bathe in rivers. Tilao seemed increasingly beleaguered, and it was apparent that he was tired of living on the run. In May, during an interview with Radio Mindanao Network, he warned, "If we see our situation becoming difficult, maybe we will just bid goodbye to these two." It was clear which "two" he was talking about.

From a base in Zamboanga City, the marines had reestablished their Siglos supply line. The action agent delivered supplies to a courier named Hamja, who took them to the guerrillas. From a house on stilts in the fishing village, he would steer his boat up the coastline and leave the goods at a drop point on the beach; Tilao's men would pick them up and carry them into the jungle. At about that time, in early spring, the CIA agents finally got their aircraft: a Predator, an unarmed, unmanned surveillance drone that flew so high in the sky that it could not be seen or heard from the ground. It was equipped with high-resolution video cameras, one of them infrared.

As long as the guerrillas stayed close to the city, food was plentiful, even fast food. When Gracia told Tilao she had prayed for a hamburger and pizza, he told Siglos, "I would like my goats to eat hamburger and pizza." Pizza was purchased, along with burgers from Jollibee's, a local fast-food chain. The food was still hot when it was delivered, its glow registering brightly on the Predator's infrared. Reprovisioned, the guerrillas pushed farther north into the hills of Zamboanga del Norte.

Clizbee and a fellow agent tracked the fugitives, working in their "office," a blue shipping container installed under the reviewing stand at the marine base in Zamboanga City. They studied monitors displaying data from a variety of tracking and surveillance systems. To make up for the CIA's refusal to provide exact coordinates, Colonel Sabban sent Aragones and an eleven-man team into the jungle to keep visual tabs on their targets. Aragones, whose hair now hung to his shoulders and whose wispy mustache and beard blew in the wind, found them easily, guided by the tracking devices. The marine captain and his men blended silently into the jungle, and waited and watched. Tilao had nineteen men with him, and the three hostages. Aragones felt that if he and his men could choose the moment, they

FORM

Ocean like beaten metal removed from the cooling pail,
mark of the hammer and tongs, the smith's signage,
grain revealed as by pressure of the *baren* in a Japanese print,
substantial, bodily, color of agave, color of bitter medicine,
translucent only when the waves rise up to break at the bar,
fingered by sun to the texture of meringue or Verano glass.
Miami is not famous for its seashells. This beach,
continually eroded, is held together by borrowed sand,
graded by tractors at dawn, willed into place by the tourism industry.
But today, after a week-long barrage of northeast winds,
it resembles the famous shell beds of Sanibel,
though these are mostly bits and pieces arrayed in sinuous drifts,
the frilled lips and spooned-out tails of horse and queen conchs,
sponge tubes, varieties of seaweed and uprooted coral,
tiny broken elkhorn infants, torn fans, punchcards,
serrated discs and tribal ornaments, teeth, dismembered ears
and bleached stone knuckles of a skeleton seeking restitution.
And the eye, from its cupola of privilege, scanning the wreckage
to seize upon the unbroken cylinder of an olive shell,
paired lightning whelks revolving in the wash,
purple scallop over-written with calcified worm tunnels—
how does it know to seek out only perfect forms?

–CAMPBELL MCGRATH

Campbell McGrath's recent collections include *Pax Atomica* (2004) and *Florida Poems* (2002). He lives in Miami.

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could easily rescue the hostages and either kill or arrest the kidnappers.

But once again competition arose over who would attempt the rescue. The American command, with forces again in the Philippines for the annual joint exercises, wanted to conduct the raid, using one of its SEAL teams. The Filipinos balked at this, and squabbled among themselves. Colonel Sabban argued that since his unit had found Tilao, and since his men were already in position, and since they counted only twenty armed men guarding the Burnhams, the marines not only deserved to conduct the mission but were best positioned and suited for it. He did not prevail. Army commanders were determined to prove themselves.

The raid took place on the afternoon of June 7, 2002, in the rain. The guerrillas had stopped to camp atop a small mountain, the ground descending steeply before them to a stream. As the Philippine army troops encircled the camp and prepared to assault, the Burnhams were quietly stringing up the small shelter they used on rainy days and hanging their hammock. They had just closed their eyes for a nap when the army struck and gunfire erupted. Martin Burnham was killed in one of the first volleys, shot through the chest. The Filipino nurse was also killed, as were some of Tilao's men. Eight of the attacking soldiers were injured. Lying beside her mortally wounded husband, herself shot in the leg, Gracia played dead, resisting the urge to cry out in pain and terror. When the shooting stopped, she raised a hand slowly, trying to draw attention without drawing fire. The raiding party at first tried to reassure her that her husband was still alive, but more than a year on the run in the jungle had turned Gracia into a hard-eyed realist.

"Martin is dead," she told them curtly.

The attempt to rescue the three hostages ended up killing two of them. It was a failure in yet another way: Tilao himself had escaped. The army found his backpack—the one with the hidden beacon—but the rebel leader and a small group of men had once again slipped the noose.

Gracia Burnham arrived back in civilization to a storm of media attention. Doctors in Zamboanga City attended to her wounded leg, and by phone she both celebrated and grieved with her family. Just before leaving the Philippines for the United States, three days after her rescue, she was wheeled out to microphones at the airport in Manila, her leg propped up in front of her. She was still gaunt, but she looked clean, rested, and enormously relieved. She seemed suddenly ten years younger. The raid had been characterized by many in the press as a debacle, but Gracia lived up to her name. She thanked the Philippine people for their prayers, and she thanked the government for her rescue. She talked about how much her husband had loved the country. She expressed no sympathy for the riddled, fleeing band of kidnappers, or for their "holy war."

VII
THE ENDGAME

Colonel Sabban was furious about the raid. He believed there would have been a better chance of keeping the three hostages alive and of capturing all of the guerrillas if Aragones and his reconnaissance team had been allowed to go in. Sabban was determined that the next move would be by his own men. He expected that Tilao's plan would be to flee the peninsula for his home islands, and for that he would need a boat. This presented an opportunity: If the guerrillas could be confronted on the water, the marines had clear jurisdiction. Sabban also knew that the peninsula was unfamiliar ground for the kidnappers, so they would likely seek to leave it from the place where they had entered. And since they had few friends and allies on the peninsula, they would likely summon the same courier and same vessel that had been serving them so well. Sabban ordered his men to quietly pick up Hamja. If they were going to lure Tilao out onto the water, they would need the courier's help.

Hamja had painted his boat with an image of a crouching Spider-Man and christened it the *Kingfisher*, emblazoning the name on the side in the sweeping script of graffiti artists everywhere. For months he had been piloting the *Kingfisher* without knowing that he was being watched, or that both the boat and the supplies it carried had come from the Philippine marines and the CIA. But he would soon learn.

Hamja was snatched by Aragones and his men off a street in Zamboanga City, and immediately and wisely agreed to cooperate—the marines had a deservedly fierce reputation. Now it was just a matter of waiting for Tilao to summon the boat. The call came sooner than Colonel Sabban had anticipated, on the afternoon of June 20. The guerrilla leader wanted to be picked up between three and four in the morning, at a spot that was a four-to-five-hour boat ride north. That meant the marines had to be ready to leave before midnight. Colonel Sabban was on a flight to Manila, so Aragones had to wait for more than an hour until he landed. The captain knew that the other branches of the military would be angry if the marines did this themselves, so he was reluctant to go ahead without the colonel's direct authorization. When Sabban called right after landing, he told Aragones he would fly back to Zamboanga immediately.

"But you go ahead," the colonel instructed. "And just keep on calling me if you need any advice."

Aragones was daunted by the responsibility, but he had so much to do, he didn't have time to dwell on it. He had to coordinate the mission on the water with the Americans, so they could get their surveillance plane and backup boats ready. The *Kingfisher* was still tied up under the safe house in the fishing village, and sending Hamja back to retrieve it was out of the question. The marines

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didn't trust him enough to let him go to the house, and sending anyone else to retrieve the boat might sound an alarm. So Aragones and his men waited until dark, slipped into the water, and swam in under the house, cut the ropes tethering the boat to the stilts, and gently and silently eased it out and away. When they were far enough from the shore they climbed aboard, started the engines, and steered it to the navy pier, where the SEALs affixed infrared beacons called "fireflies" to the bow and stern.

Hamja would be piloting his boat, but to keep an eye on him, Aragones recruited a trusted Basilan man named Gardo, who had worked as an agent for him in the past. Hamja phoned Tilao to tell him that all was ready, and that his "cousin" would be coming along because he was more accustomed to navigating between the peninsula and the island. Aragones told Hamja that this was to be just a reconnaissance mission, that he and Gardo were going to be watched from above as they ferried the guerrillas back to the island. But Gardo knew that once they had steered the *Kingfisher* about a mile offshore, the marines would confront them. The approach would be made far enough from land that none of the guerrillas could swim back. Gardo was instructed that if gunfire erupted, he was to dive off the *Kingfisher* and break a Chemlight he was wearing as a necklace so that he could be easily seen in the water. Hamja, who had earned neither the trust nor the affection of the marines, was not so fortunate. He was not told that his boat would be attacked; and once it was, he would be on his own in the water.

The *Kingfisher* was outfitted with several large plastic jugs of what appeared to be gasoline. They were filled about four-fifths of the way with water, and the rest was gas—the fuel is lighter than water and doesn't mix, so anyone uncapping a jug would smell pure gas. The ruse ensured that if somehow Tilao were able to evade the ambush, he would quickly run out of fuel.

Late on the evening of June 20, just thirteen days after the botched rescue, four boats slipped away from berths at the navy pier in Zamboanga City and steered north along the coastline. Two were U.S. Navy vessels, each carrying a SEAL team. Another was the very same flat, open, gray wooden speedboat used by Abu Sayyaf in the Dos Palmas kidnapping, now carrying Captain Aragones and fifteen men armed with assault rifles, and bearing two M-60 guns mounted at the bow. Moving well in front of these three was the long, sleek boat that Hamja, its young owner, had for months been using to supply Tilao.

On the monitor inside the CIA's container back at the base in Zamboanga City, the four vessels showed as gray shadows on a field of black, tracked from above by two CIA pilots in a high-flying RG-8 Schweitzer aircraft. The agents on the ground monitored the vessels' slow progress for hours.

Sabban was still at the Manila airport when the boats set off. High overhead, the CIA plane executed wide, silent sweeps, moving over the jungle and then back out over the water, keeping its cameras trained on the boats. In the speedboat, Aragones slept. His long hair and wispy beard made him the scruffiest military officer in the Philippines. He could not imagine Tilao slipping this trap, and he didn't expect him to go down without a fight. The guerrilla had often boasted of his eagerness to be martyred for his cause. With luck, he would get his wish.

The CIA officers watching the monitors in their office in the container could see everything. The deserted beach registered bright white against the dark gray of the sea, and just in from the water's edge were the splayed gray silhouettes of palm trees as seen from high above. As the other boats waited just over the horizon, the *Kingfisher* touched sand. The two men appeared on the CIA monitor as black shadows. Hamja stepped out on the beach, slowly approached the tree line, and then stood and waited.

Army troops descended in force on the terrorists' hideout—and found no one. Tilao and the captives had vanished.

The aircraft cameras slowly panned up and down the beach, and back into the jungle. After long minutes of waiting, one black figure emerged from the foliage. He and Hamja stood together. It looked like they were talking, as the second man could be seen gesturing with his hands. Then, from a point farther up the beach, a group of figures emerged—it was hard to tell how many. They were moving close together, and on the screen they blended into a black blob. A bird flew above them. As they moved down the beach, they spread out into separate shadows, so distinct that the CIA monitor in Zamboanga City showed their legs moving as they walked toward the boat.

While Hamja was on the beach with the others, Gardo had activated the fireflies as instructed, by pushing a button on the bottom of each. The signals, silent and invisible to the naked eye, appeared as bright, blinking beacons to the aircraft's infrared camera. Once the *Kingfisher* had moved offshore, the beacons would allow the pursuers to spot it with night-vision binoculars.

The boat shoved off. When it had steered about a kilometer offshore, it turned south. The marines followed the vessel's progress for a time, waiting for it to come farther out

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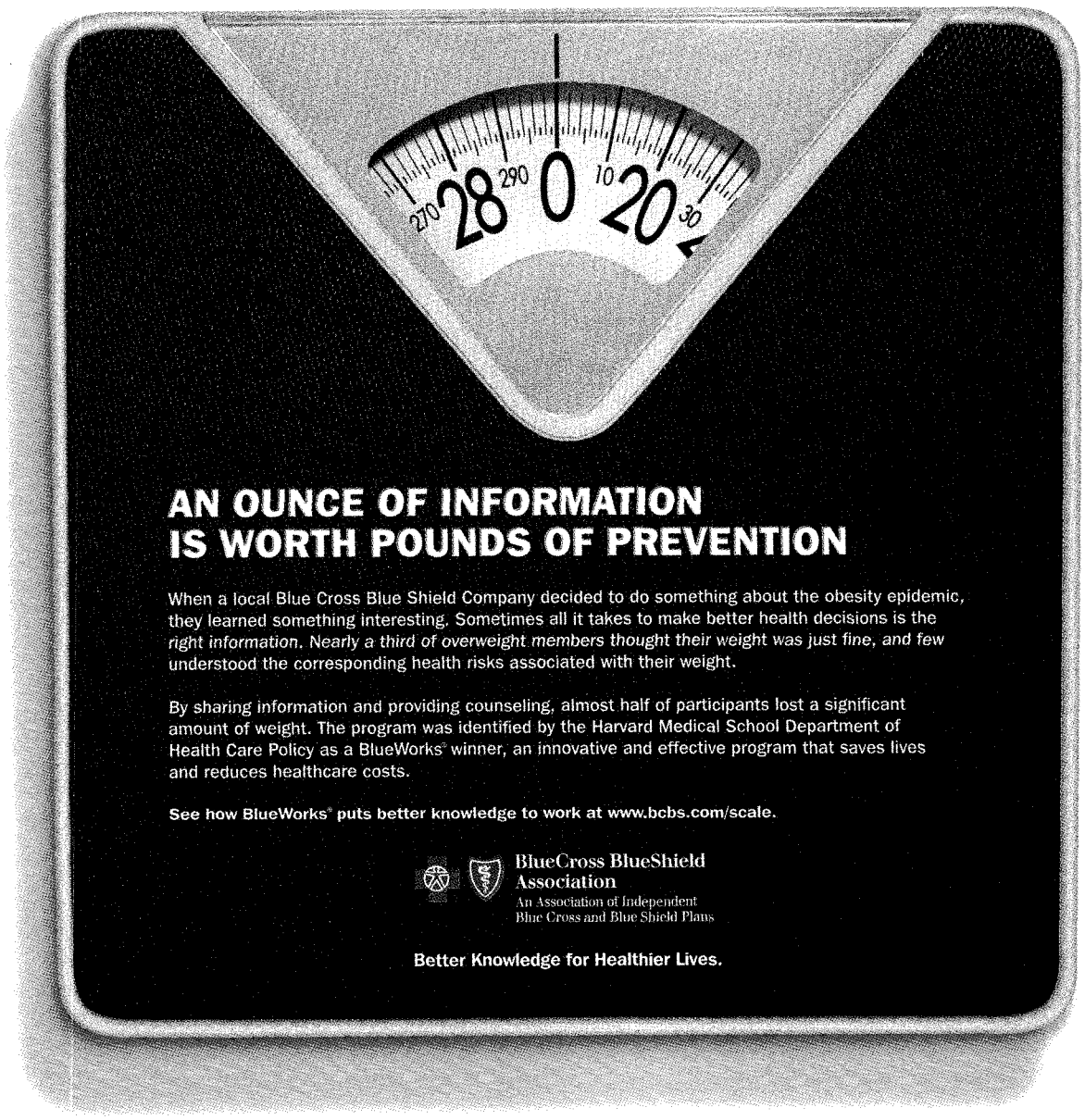

AN OUNCE OF INFORMATION IS WORTH POUNDS OF PREVENTION

When a local Blue Cross Blue Shield Company decided to do something about the obesity epidemic, they learned something interesting. Sometimes all it takes to make better health decisions is the right information. Nearly a third of overweight members thought their weight was just fine, and few understood the corresponding health risks associated with their weight.

By sharing information and providing counseling, almost half of participants lost a significant amount of weight. The program was identified by the Harvard Medical School Department of Health Care Policy as a BlueWorks® winner, an innovative and effective program that saves lives and reduces healthcare costs.

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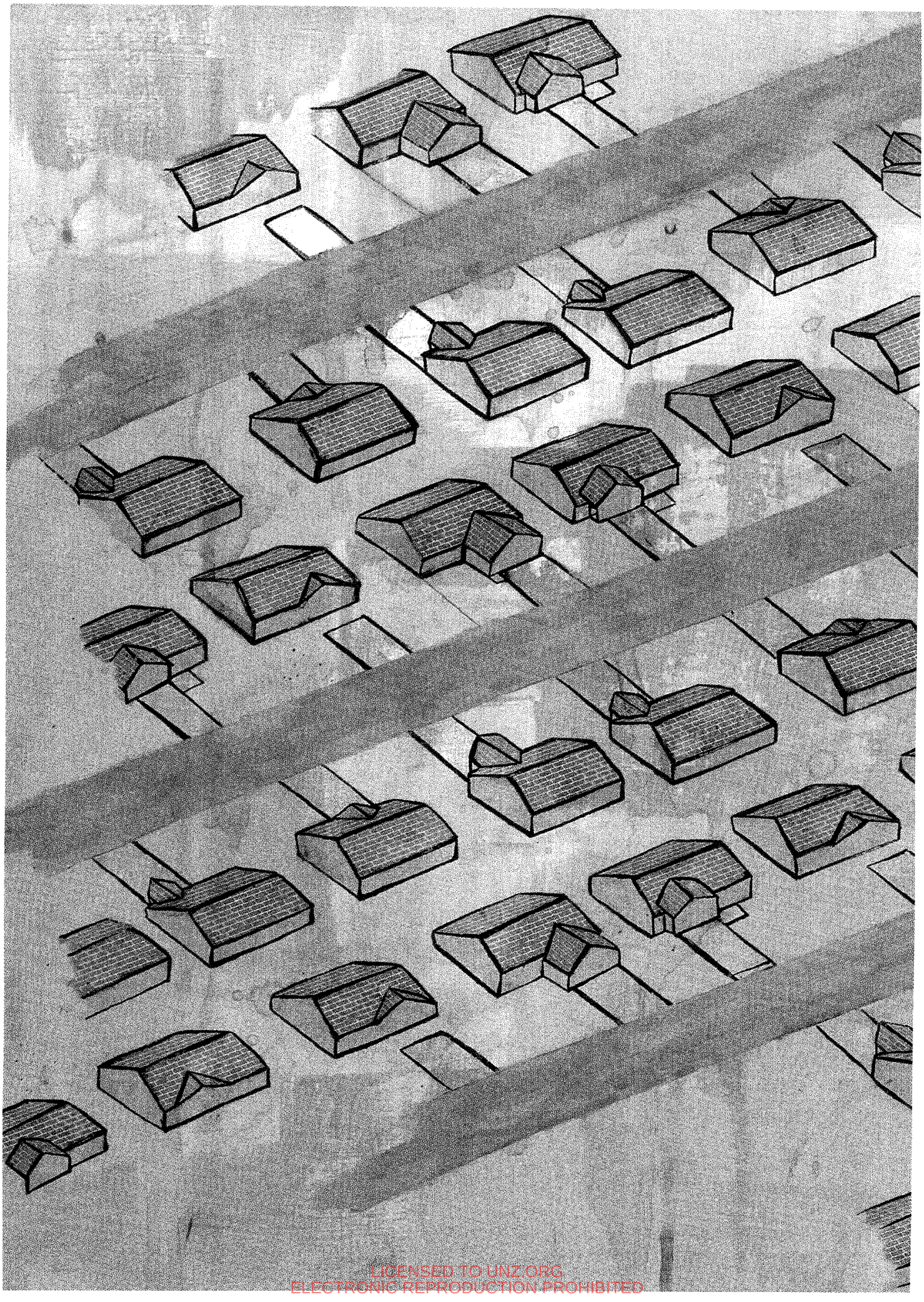

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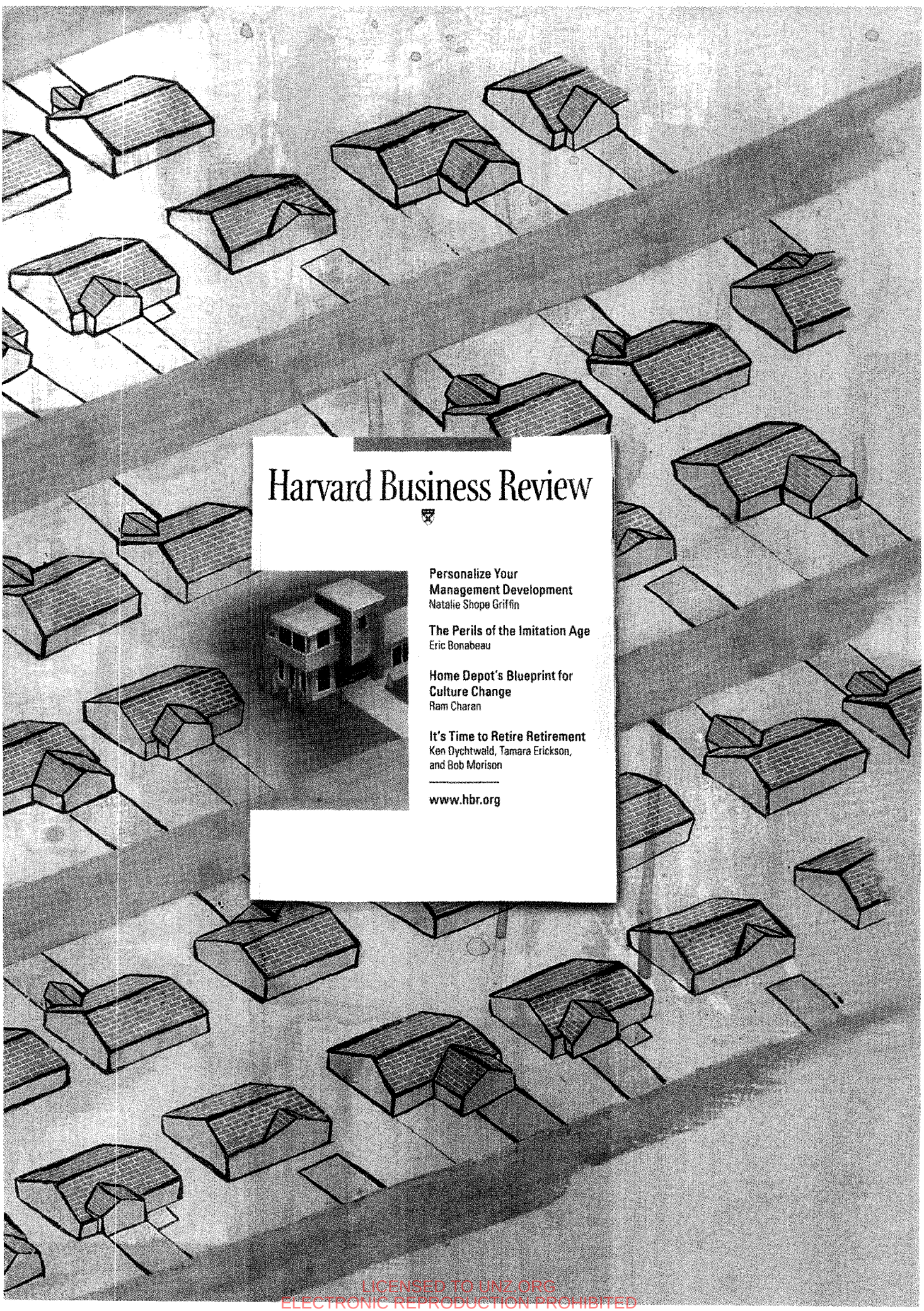

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THE MISSING REWARD

BY TERRENCE HENRY

Two and a half years after the rescue of Gracia Burnham and the killing of Abu Sabaya, three Filipino men stood in front of Basilan Provincial Hospital, just miles from where Gracia and her husband, Martin, had been held during their yearlong captivity. Wearing long-sleeved white T-shirts and blue hats emblazoned with the "RFJ" logo of the U.S. State Department's Rewards for Justice program, each man had black leather gloves on his hands and a stocking masking his face. After a short speech by an official from the U.S. Embassy in Manila, each man was handed a bulky plastic attaché case stuffed with 18.7 million Philippine pesos, or roughly $334,000—reward money for informant work that had led to the killing of Hamsiraji Marusi Sali, one of five Abu Sayyaf commanders wanted by the U.S. government in the murders of Guillermo Sobero and Martin Burnham. It was the first reward paid in the Philippines under the Rewards for Justice program, which in 2002 had offered as much as $5 million for help leading to the arrest or capture of the Abu Sayyaf's leaders. A placard beside the podium at the reward ceremony displayed photos of the five wanted men, with a bold red X through the faces of Sabaya and Sali (a third, known as Abu Sulaiman, has since been killed). But Alvin Siglos, who stood to earn just such a reward for his role in Gracia Burnham's rescue and Abu Sabaya's death, was not included in the ceremony that day.

Since the start of the rewards program in the Philippines, the State Department has paid a total of $1.6 million to six informants—awarded at three press conferences, each with its ceremony of disguised informants and suitcases full of money—but Alvin Siglos has not been a part of any of them. Although he has approached the U.S. Embassy in Manila several times, Siglos has yet to receive any reward from the U.S. government, nearly five years after the fact.

Why not? The reasons are unclear. Part of the explanation may lie in the sluggish pace of bureaucracy: The Rewards for Justice program doles out the money through a nominating system, in which an informant must be nominated by the employing agency, at the local embassy (in Siglos's case, the CIA officers would nominate him through the embassy in Manila), and then vetted through an often lengthy verification process to determine his role in the case and the appropriate reward, if any. According to a Rewards for Justice spokesman, Siglos has not actually been nominated—which would mean that the CIA has yet to name him for a reward. Maybe this is because Siglos's reputation is less than pristine—though the reward program has no official morals clause—or maybe it's because someone in the embassy simply doesn't like him. But the Philippine marines he helped believe he earned the money. For now, the Rewards for Justice spokesman will say only that Siglos's case is "under review."

Terrence Henry is an *Atlantic* staff editor.

to sea, but it seemed to have set its course, and was staying about a kilometer from shore. This was a problem. What if the guerrillas decided to make a run for it? The *Kingfisher* was fast and maneuverable, and Tilao might be able to get close enough to the shoreline for him and his men to swim to land. So the marines changed plans: they would ram it. Their boat was much larger than the *Kingfisher*, so ramming would most likely break and sink the smaller craft. The men aboard would be dumped into the water.

On the CIA's screen, the white speck of the *Kingfisher* could be seen plowing steadily on, leaving its long black wake. When the Schweitzer passed directly overhead, the officers could see the forms of nine men on board, most of them toward the stern.

Then the marine speedboat, moving much faster, jumped onto the screen from the bottom, cut rapidly across the smaller vessel's wake, and then turned hard right, aiming straight for the *Kingfisher*'s port side.

Aboard the speedboat, Aragones and his men leaned forward expectantly. Their three motors were quieter than the *Kingfisher*'s, so Aragones's strike force would be seen before being heard.

"Five hundred yards," announced one of the men in the bow, peering ahead through his night-vision goggles.

"Two hundred yards."

"Get ready!" Aragones shouted, and the men braced themselves and raised their weapons; someone switched on the speedboat's searchlights.

Seconds before the collision, puffs of white appeared on the CIA screen, just off the *Kingfisher*'s starboard side. Tilao and the other men aboard, including Hamja and Gardo, had seen what was coming and hurled themselves overboard; the puffs were heat from the guns of two guerrilla fighters who opened fire on the speedboat as soon as they hit the water. Onscreen, the speedboat came to a sudden stop, halted by the force of the collision. It then appeared to plow straight through the smaller boat; actually, it was pushing under it and tearing it in two.

Just before impact, the faces of the men in the waves were clearly visible in the speedboat's searchlights, and their weapons flashed when they fired. As the speedboat swung around after the collision, the marines unleashed a torrent of fire from their starboard side. Aragones felt the burn of the guns beside him and inhaled the smell of gunpowder. He knew the shooting from the men bobbing in the waves would be inaccurate—they were treading water as they fired—so he chose his own shots with care. Mixed with the smoke came the distinct coppery smell of blood.

Then the firing stopped. For a few moments there were just the sounds of men shouting and the lapping of the water. The marines unleashed another furious cascade from the starboard side. Then Aragones heard again the *pop-pop-pop* of an automatic weapon from the waves.

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One of the guerrillas was shooting up at the vessel from the port side. Aragones raced to join his men on that side and, as the other men cut loose with their weapons, he squeezed off the last ten rounds in his magazine. The body of the man in the water was cut in half, and vanished under the waves.

Cries came from terrified men in the water. Gardo had activated his Chemlight. Hamja had swum under the marine speedboat and was clinging to it. Hauled aboard with the others—four of Tilao's men survived—Hamja told Aragones that he had ducked underwater and swum to the port side after the shooting started. Tilao, he said, had done the same. Hamja had grabbed onto the boat, but Tilao had swum out farther, shouted, and opened fire. The man whose body was cut in half had been Tilao.

Captain Aragones phoned Clizbee and announced, "We just killed the motherfucker."

VIII
THE AFTERMATH

Tilao's body was never found, which fed rumors that he had somehow escaped yet again. But interrogation of the four captured Abu Sayyaf men—one of whom died during questioning—confirmed Hamja's story. Tilao was the final victim of his bloody kidnapping spree.

He had failed to ignite jihad. In the four and a half years since his death, Abu Sayyaf has faltered. Although it survives as a stubborn regional insurrection, it has mounted no spectacular attacks or kidnappings. This past December, police discovered what was believed to be the body of Khadaffy Janjalani. Abu Sayyaf continues to battle marines and to set off bombs on contested islands like Jolo, but shows no sign of resurrecting itself into the charismatic movement it became in the time of "Abu Sabaya." His removal by Philippine forces did not inspire the larger Islamist struggle he had hoped for; the invisibility of the United States' role reduced the effort to a local police action. In a world where any visible U.S. military intervention prompts a dangerous backlash, Aldam Tilao slipped quietly and permanently under the waves.

"His death significantly downgraded the leadership and strength of the group," said Sabban in an interview last year. "He was spokesperson and operations officer. Janjalani is just a figurehead. It was Sabaya who made all the real decisions. Even after the kidnappings in 2001, the others all drifted away. It was Sabaya who kept the most valuable hostages. That right there shows you who the most important figure was."

Sabban is now a brigadier general, based in two small rooms off a corrugated shed at the Philippine marine base on Jolo. Captain Aragones is now a major, and clean-shaven, but since he still does undercover work, he wears his hair longer than most marines. Arlyn dela Cruz was kidnapped herself not long after her successful interview with Tilao and the Burnhams, and underwent her own ordeal in the jungle before being released through the intercession of her "friend" Khadaffy Janjalani. She writes a column for *The Philippines Daily Inquirer*, and reports for Net-25 TV, a UHF TV network in the Philippines.

Gracia Burnham visited President Bush at the White House a month after her return to the United States. Her leg had healed, and she moved confidently in a long, flowery skirt and a lacy white blouse. She spoke about her husband's unfailing kindness toward their kidnappers, even as they handcuffed him to a tree every night. And she added: "Even though Martin was kind to them, we never forgot who the good guys were and who the bad guys were. The men who abducted us and held us—who murdered some and mistreated others, who kept us running and starving in the jungle—are criminals, and they deserve to be punished."

CIA FOOTAGE of the raid on the *Kingfisher*: The target boat appears as a white speck ahead of its black wake.

Alvin Siglos collected the $100,000 in Philippine reward money and reportedly blew it quickly, gambling on cockfights and throwing big parties. Sabban and Aragones urged him to keep a low profile, pointing out that the terrorist group might target him for revenge, but he seemed unafraid. He has never collected a penny of the $5 million American reward (see "The Missing Reward," opposite). When speaking of his role in the mission during an interview last year, he broke down crying several times as he recalled his stark betrayal of his childhood friend, and he even defended Tilao. He said the jihadist was planning to release the Burnhams unharmed. The marines had never told him, Siglos complained, that they intended to kill his friend. "Still, he killed my uncle," he said through his tears. "He was the blood of my mother."

He still thinks he is owed the American reward, and it would seem he is right.

Mark Bowden is an *Atlantic* national correspondent.

COURTESY WILD EYES PRODUCTIONS

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The software mogul Tim Gill has a mission: Stop the Rick Santorums of tomorrow before they get started. How a network of gay political donors is stealthily fighting sexual discrimination and reshaping American politics

BY JOSHUA GREEN

They Won't Know What Hit Them

Photograph by Stephen Ramsey

A tough loss can be hard to swallow, and plenty of defeated politicians have been known to grumble about sinister conspiracies. When they are rising stars like Danny Carroll, the Republican speaker pro tempore of Iowa's House of Representatives, and the loss is unexpected, the urge to blame unseen forces can be even stronger—and in Carroll's case, it would have the additional distinction of being justified. ¶ Carroll was among the dozens of targets of a group of rich gay philanthropists who quietly joined forces last year, under the leadership of a reclusive Colorado technology mogul, to counter the tide of antigay politics in America that has generated, among other things, a succession of state ballot initiatives banning gay marriage. Carroll had sponsored such a bill

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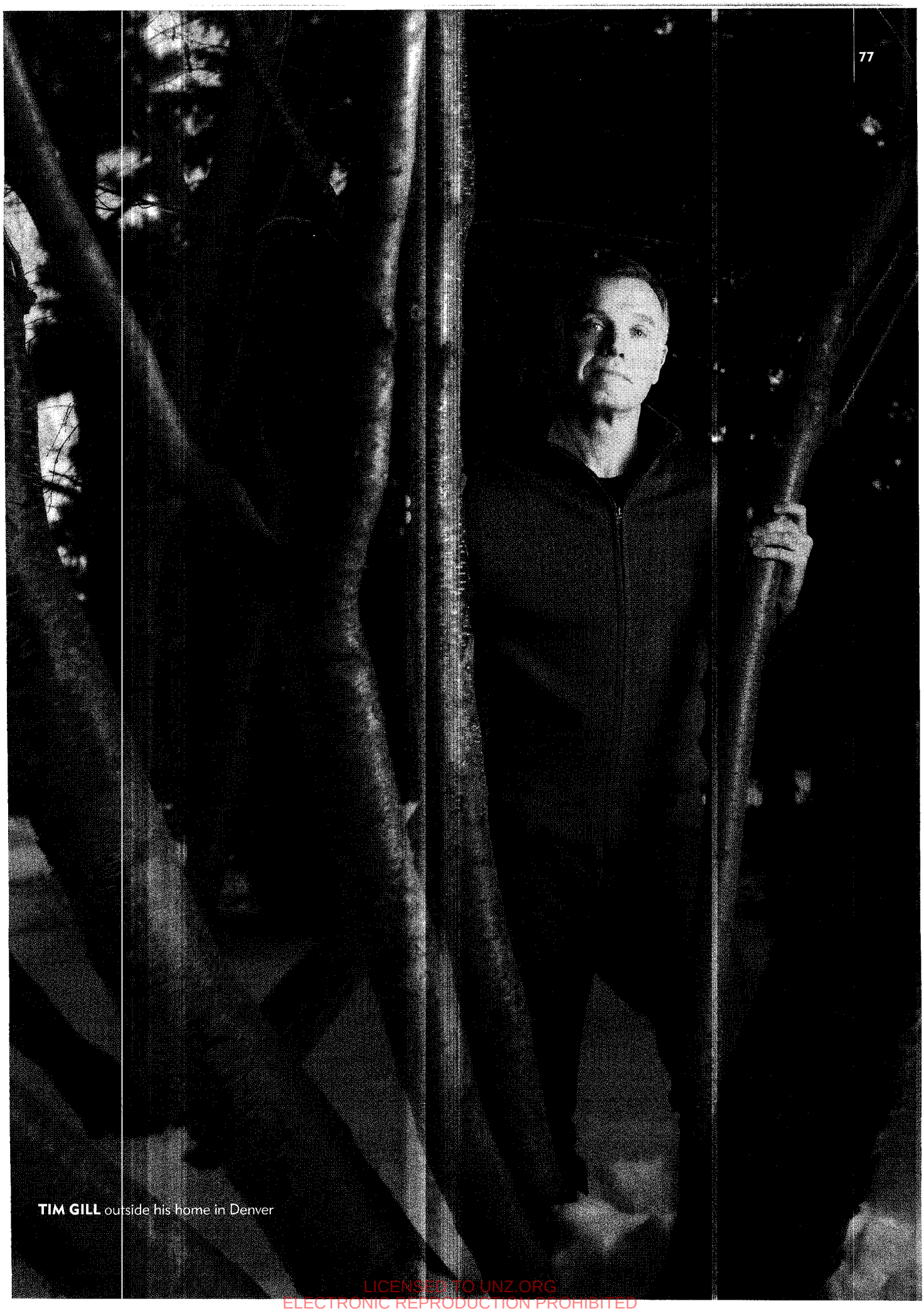

TIM GILL outside his home in Denver

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in Iowa and guided it to passage in the state House of Representatives, the first step toward getting it on the ballot.

Like many other state legislatures last year, Iowa's was narrowly divided. So all it would take to break the momentum toward a constitutional marriage ban was to tip a few close races. If Democrats took control of the House and Senate, however narrowly, the initiative would die, and with it the likelihood of further legislation limiting civil rights for gays and lesbians. And, fortuitously, Carroll's own reelection race looked to be one of the closest. He represented the liberal college town of Grinnell and had won the last time around by just a handful of votes.

Over the summer, Carroll's opponent started receiving checks from across the country—significant sums for a statehouse race, though none so large as to arouse suspicion (the gifts topped out at $1,000). Because they came from individuals and not from organizations, nothing identified the money as being "gay," or even coordinated. Only a very astute political operative would have spotted the unusual number of out-of-state donors and pondered their interest in an obscure midwestern race. And only someone truly versed in the world of gay causes would have noticed a $1,000 contribution from Denver, Colorado, and been aware that its source, Tim Gill, is the country's biggest gay donor, and the nexus of an aggressive new force in national politics.

Carroll certainly didn't catch on until I called him after the election, in which Democrats took control of both legislative chambers, as well as Carroll's seat and four of the five others targeted by Gill and his allies. Carroll was just sitting down to dinner but agreed to talk about his loss, which he attributed to the activism of Grinnell College students. A suggestion that he'd been targeted by a nationwide network of wealthy gay activists was met with polite midwestern skepticism. But Carroll was sufficiently intrigued to propose that we each log on to the Iowa Ethics and Campaign Disclosure Board's Web site and examine his opponent's disclosure report together, over the telephone.

Scrolling through the thirty-two-page roster of campaign contributors revealed plenty of $25 and $50 donations from nearby towns like Oskaloosa and New Sharon. But a $1,000 donation from California stood out on page 2, and, several pages later, so did another $1,000 from New York City. "I'll be darned," said Carroll. "That doesn't make any sense." As we kept scrolling, Carroll began reading aloud with mounting disbelief as the evidence passed before his eyes. "Denver ... Dallas ... Los Angeles ... Malibu ... there's New York again ... San Francisco! I can't—I just cannot believe this," he said, finally. "Who is this guy again?"

Tim Gill is best known as the founder of the publishing-software giant Quark Inc., and for a long time was one of the few openly gay members of the Forbes 400 list of the richest Americans. He was born in 1953 to one of Colorado's well-known Republican political families. (The town of Gill in the north-central part of the state is named after them.) After earning a degree in applied mathematics and computer science from the University of Colorado at Boulder, Gill founded Quark in his apartment in 1981, in the manner of other self-made computer magnates like Bill Gates and Steve Jobs, with a $2,000 loan from his parents.

While Gill participated in gay activism in college, his passions ran more toward differential calculus, and he didn't feel particularly beset by his homosexuality. He had come out to his parents when he was a teenager and been accepted. It was the very ordinariness of his upper-middle-class upbringing, in fact, that made his political awakening such a shock. In 1992, a ballot initiative approved by Colorado voters altered the state constitution to prohibit laws aimed at protecting gays and lesbians (it was overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court). Gill noticed bumper stickers supporting the measure on the desks of some Quark employees. Not long afterward, he set up the Gay & Lesbian Fund for Colorado, through which he donates to "mainstream" charities—libraries, symphonies, vaccination clinics, even a *Star Trek* exhibit at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science—to spread the message that gays and lesbians care about the same things as everyone else. In 2000, he sold his interest in Quark for a reported half-billion dollars in order to focus full-time on his philanthropy.

Even as he has shied from the spotlight, Gill has become one of the most generous and widest-reaching political benefactors in the country, and emblematic of a new breed of business-minded donor that is rapidly changing American politics. A surge of new wealth has created a generation of givers eager to influence politics but barred from the traditional channels of participation by recent campaign-finance laws designed to limit large gifts to candidates and political parties. Like Gill, many of these figures are entrepreneurs who have made fortunes in technology. And

"We live in a post–*Will & Grace* society ... but this is a recent development, and the political world has not yet caught up. The day will come when all of this is aligned, but we're not there yet."

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like Gill, many turned first to philanthropy, revolutionizing the field by importing strategies from the business world and largely abandoning the old dispositions toward moneyed dilettantism and gifts to large foundations in favor of creating independent charitable enterprises that emphasize innovation and accountability. The Gates Foundation, founded by Bill Gates and his wife, Melinda, is a prime example of this new results-oriented philanthropy.

Gill's principal interest is gay equality. His foundations have given about $115 million to charities. His serious involvement in politics is a more recent development, though geared toward the same goal. In 2000, he gave $300,000 in political donations, which grew to $800,000 in 2002, $5 million in 2004, and a staggering $15 million last year, almost all of it to state and local campaigns. Gill, who considers himself a "pathological introvert," normally shuns media attention, but he agreed to meet with me in his Denver office last November, on the eve of the election, to explain what he is trying to accomplish.

"My goal is to see that all Americans are treated equally regardless of sexuality," he told me when we met. Tall and lean, Gill is a vigorous fifty-three years old, a sci-fi buff and an avid snowboarder (he runs a social networking site for gay snowboarders, called Outboard). He was dressed in the manner of a successful Denver businessman—casual, but not overly so, in jeans, a sports shirt, and Italian leather shoes. In our conversations, he gave the impression of someone who feels he has been picked on and now, having acquired the means, fully intends to do something about it.

Gill led me through his evolution as a donor. For years he gave generously to gay organizations and dutifully supported gay-friendly candidates. His guiding ambition was helping to teach other donors and nonprofits how to operate more efficiently, and he had organized a series of major-donor conferences toward that end. But several years ago, a growing number of his peers began to sense that they were playing in the wrong arena. "A lot of [gay donors] are driven, cycle to cycle, by the notion that there's going to be an epiphany—that one day they'll wake up and accept us," he said. "But this group had spent millions of dollars on philanthropy, and yet woken up the morning after the election to see gay-marriage bans enacted all across the country."

Gill decided to find out how he could become more effective and enlisted as his political counselor an acerbic lawyer and former tobacco lobbyist named Ted Trimpa, who is Colorado's answer to Karl Rove. Trimpa believes that the gay-rights community directs too much of its money to thoroughly admirable national candidates who don't need it, while neglecting less compelling races that would have a far greater impact on gay rights—a tendency he calls "glamour giving." Trimpa cited the example of Barack Obama: an attractive candidate, solid on gay rights, and viscerally exciting to donors. It *feels good* to write him a check. An analysis of Obama's 2004 Senate race, which he won by nearly fifty points, had determined that gays contributed more than $500,000. "The temptation is always to swoon for the popular candidate," Trimpa told me, "but a fraction of that money, directed at the right state and local races, could have flipped a few chambers. 'Just because he's cute' isn't a strategy."

Together, Gill and Trimpa decided to eschew national races in favor of state and local ones, which could be influenced in large batches and for much less money. Most antigay measures, they discovered, originate in state legislatures. Operating at that level gave them a chance to "punish the wicked," as Gill puts it—to snuff out rising politicians who were building their careers on antigay policies, before they could achieve national influence. Their chief cautionary example of such a villain is Senator Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania, who once compared homosexuality to "man on dog" sex (and was finally defeated last year, at a cost of more than $20 million). Santorum got his start working in the state legislature. As Gill and Trimpa looked at their evolving plan, it seemed realistic. "The strategic piece of the puzzle we'd been missing—consistent across almost every legislature we examined—is that it's often just a handful of people, two or three, who introduce the most outrageous legislation and force the rest of their colleagues to vote on it," Gill explained. "If you could reach these few people or neutralize them by flipping the chamber to leaders who would block bad legislation, you'd have a dramatic effect."

Gill's idea was to identify vulnerable candidates like Danny Carroll and move quickly to eliminate them without the burden of first having to win the consent of some risk-averse large organization or board of directors. Another element of this strategy is stealth. Revealing targets only after an election makes it impossible for them to fight back and sends a message to other politicians that attacking gays could put them in the crosshairs. Independence also allowed Gill to pursue an element of his philosophy that chafes many national gay organizations: the belief that enduring acceptance can be won only with Republican support. "If you want a majority, you have to change people's minds," he said, noting that in Colorado, Republicans outnumber Democrats. "Just because you're conservative doesn't mean you're antigay."

With that in mind, he assembled a bipartisan team of political operatives and tested his theory in 2004, quietly targeting three antigay Colorado incumbents; two of them went down. Through the combined efforts of a host of progressive interest groups, including many supported by Gill, Democrats captured both chambers of the legislature for the first time in forty years. Gill's decision to back Democrats in Colorado was the only choice that would produce the gay-tolerant leadership he's pursuing. But ten years from now, he told me, he hopes he'll be able to give evenly to Republicans and Democrats.

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Convinced his approach was sound, Gill decided to go big. When I visited his headquarters last fall, liberals were working alongside conservatives on a list compiled by his top consultants—one a national Democratic consultant, the other a former Karl Rove protégé—of seventy races in which a key antigay candidate was vulnerable or the outcome of a race was likely to affect control of the legislature. The list included state legislators, governors, and judges, not just Republicans but Democrats as well—like Philip Travis, the Democratic legislator leading the push to overturn gay marriage in Massachusetts.

From the standpoint of an entrepreneur, Gill saw opportunity and believed he could amplify his return on investment. Last spring, he sponsored another conference for wealthy gay donors, only this one designed to steer money to the right political races instead of the right nonprofits. His pitch was simple: Instead of waiting for a political savior to fix everything, consider donating to these races, where you'll have more effect at a fraction of the cost. As Trimpa later characterized the rationale for such an approach: "We live in a post–*Will & Grace* society. Americans believe and understand that gay people are everywhere, and most view them in a mainstream context. But this is a recent development, and the political world has not yet caught up—it's lagging behind. The day will come when all of this is aligned, but we're not there yet."

In the 2006 elections, on a level where a few thousand dollars can decide a close race, Gill's universe of donors injected more than $3 million, providing in some cases more than 20 percent of a candidate's or organization's budget. On Election Day, fifty of the seventy targeted candidates were defeated, Danny Carroll among them; and out of the thirteen states where Gill and his allies invested, four—Iowa, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Washington—saw control of at least one legislative chamber switch to the Democratic Party. (In Massachusetts, Travis decided to retire rather than seek reelection.) The national climate, which was strongly anti-Republican, helped bring about this transformation. But Gill's stealth campaign was both effective and precedent-setting. For the first time, in a broad and organized way, gays had taken the initiative in a sweeping multistate strategy and had mostly prevailed.

The history of gays as open participants in American politics is a relatively brief one, though it contains clear antecedents for what Gill is attempting to do. In the 1950s, the homophile movement first sought social acceptance for gays and lesbians through a handful of small, politically cautious organizations like the Mattachine Society, which sponsored newsletters and discussion groups and lobbied to end police raids targeting gay activities. The Stonewall riots and the gay-liberation movement of the 1960s and '70s worked toward securing the legal protection afforded by federal minority status, to diminish discrimination and blackmail. The devastating rise of AIDS in the 1980s halted momentum toward the political mainstream and helped solidify gays' status as victims in the public mind. The failure of state and federal government to respond to the crisis, however, prompted

A GREEK STATUE

With the help of people and other disasters,
time has worked pretty hard on it.
First it took away the nose, later the genitals,
one by one fingers and toes,
with the passing of years arms, one after the other,
right thigh and left thigh,
back and hips, head and buttocks,
and what fell off, time broke into pieces,
into chunks, into gravel, into sand.

When someone living dies this way,
much blood flows with each blow.

Yet marble statues perish pale
and not always all the way.

Of the one we are speaking of, only a torso remains,
like breath held under exertion
as it now must
draw unto
itself
all the grace and weight
of what has been lost.

And it pulls this off,
pulls this off still,
pulls us in and dazzles,
dazzles and endures–

Time deserves an honorable mention here,
as it stopped midway
and left something for later.

—WISŁAWA SZYMBORSKA

Translated from the Polish by Joanna Trzeciak

Wisława Szymborska received the 1996 Nobel Prize in Literature. Joanna Trzeciak is the translator of *Miracle Fair: Selected Poems of Wisława Szymborska* (2001).

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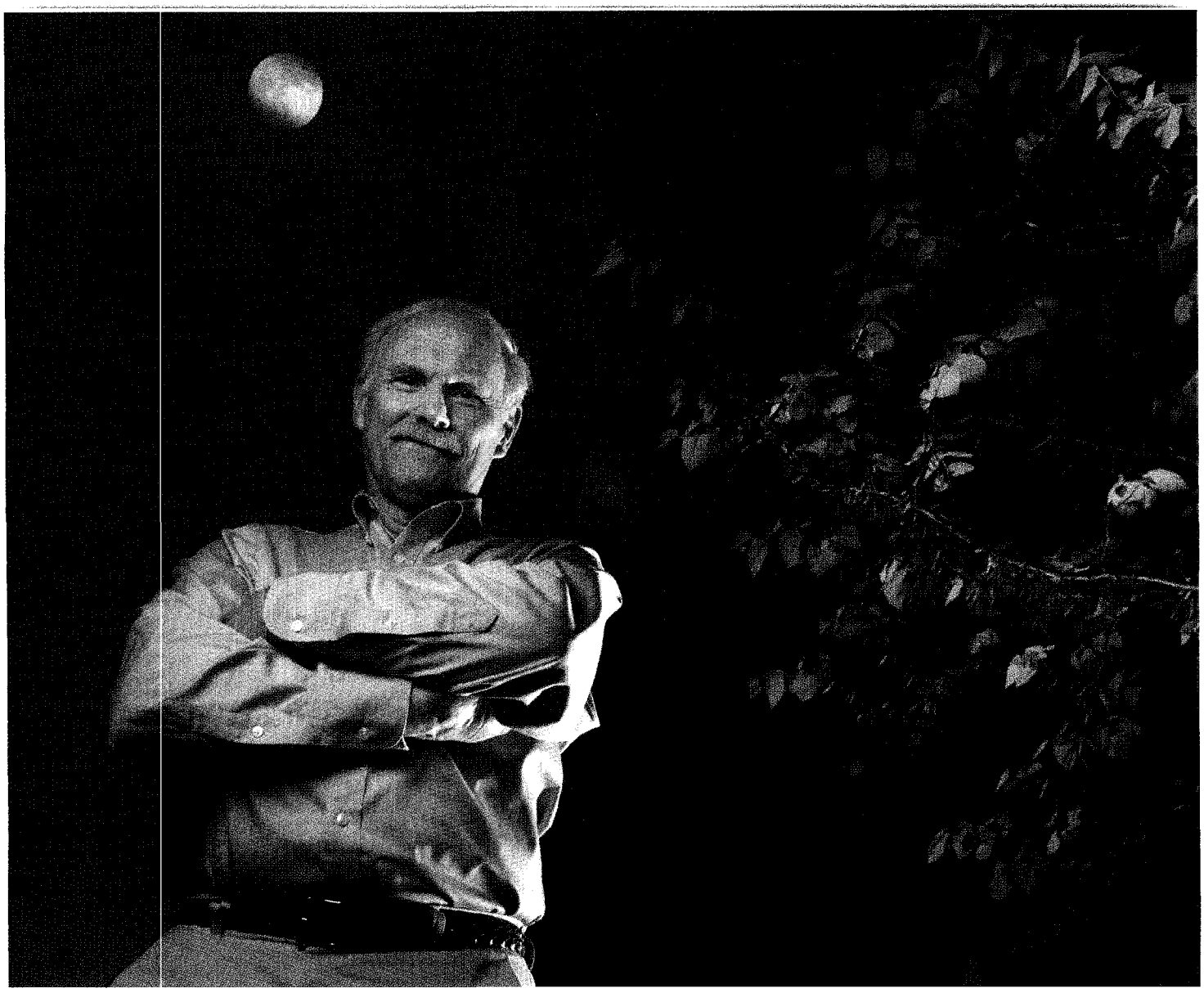

GM Gave Me A Mission To Mars

My name is Gerry Voeck. At GM, I worked on developing the technology that helped guide the Viking mission to Mars. Landing on the surface of Mars in 1975 forever changed how we view the universe. I think what GM is doing today will as well. GM's scientists have built the world's first drivable fuel cell by-wire vehicle — a high performance hydrogen propulsion system that emits only clean water vapor. Imagine that! GM is working toward cutting our dependence on petroleum, reducing emissions to nothing, and building a better performing, more powerful vehicle than ever before. Now that's an Earth shattering idea.

Gerry Voeck

Only GM

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gays for the first time to organize to provide the care and services others would not. Explicitly gay philanthropy grew from a few million dollars a year in the early 1980s to around $100 million in the early 1990s, as independent, privately funded organizations came into being.

When AIDS finally did register as a national pandemic, political acceptance of homosexuals remained limited even in the most liberal spheres. In 1988, Michael Dukakis declined gay contributions to his presidential campaign after deeming them too politically risky. Bill Clinton's candidacy, four years later, appeared to change that. Clinton openly accepted millions of dollars from many rich activists, promising a broad federal assault on AIDS, a federal antidiscrimination statute, and, most famously, an executive order lifting the military's ban on gays. "When Clinton was elected, everyone thought there would be this epiphany on gay rights," said Patrick Guerriero, a former Republican state legislator and mayor in Massachusetts who runs Gill's political team, the Gill Action Fund (which operates independently of his foundation). "Instead, the only two major pieces of legislation were a disaster: 'Don't ask, don't tell' and the Defense of Marriage Act. The experience of the '90s taught us that there is no magic president who's going to fix everything."

The Clinton presidency is one of the major fault lines dividing gay politics, and disappointment with it was one of the motivating forces behind Gill's move away from national politics. But his is a controversial view. Jeff Soref, an heir to the Master Lock fortune who became a prominent philanthropist during the AIDS crisis and was later appointed to the Democratic National Committee, vigorously disputes the notion that Clinton's presidency was a failure and doubts that Gill's response to it is the appropriate one.

"Clinton broke the silence about the AIDS epidemic," Soref says. "He told gay people we were part of his vision for America. He directed federal money to AIDS research. He gave us an AIDS czar and a liaison in the White House and an executive order banning discrimination in the federal workforce. He invited us to the table and gave us a place in the Democratic Party. One of the problems with Tim's strategy is that he's turning people away from national politics at a time when Democrats have just achieved a big victory—one that we weren't as big a part of as we might have been, perhaps because of his steering gay money away from the national level. I've personally gotten calls, pre- and postelection, from Democratic leaders who feel the gay community has not been as supportive in this election as in previous ones. There's a tangible downside to disengaging. In a competitive environment, our issues may not get the attention we want them to get."

Soref cited the possibility that the new Democratic Congress may soon consider a long-desired national employment nondiscrimination bill as one reason not to abandon Washington. "I can understand Tim's frustration," he says. "But his way, state by state, will take years. There's nothing like passing national legislation that benefits everybody equally."

As the amount of money in politics continues to grow, against a backdrop of deep Democratic frustration over the party's narrow losses in the last two presidential races, the momentum of the Democratic world is moving in a direction closer to Gill's than to that of traditional Washington insiders. Well beyond its gay facet, Democratic politics is increasingly dominated by rich donors who share Gill's dissatisfaction with traditional methods of party politics. This group believes that conservatives were able to reshape American politics because they built, over the last forty years, a broad movement independent of the Republican Party to support conservative candidates and espouse their ideals—an achievement liberals now wish to match. Beginning in 2004, many of these rich Democratic donors lavished tens of millions of dollars upon new independent enterprises, like America Coming Together and the Democracy Alliance, meant to impose accountability and tactical discipline on the liberal movement, expressly to improve Democrats' performance at the polls.

What came into being instead were large, cumbersome outfits—technically independent, but hardly nimble—comprising many of the same strategists and warring interest groups that had collectively lost the election in 2000, and again in 2004. (In frustration, several of the party's biggest donors, including George Soros and Peter Lewis, severely curtailed their giving last year.)

Gill's decision to shift away from national politics seems dictated even more by his philosophy about how to engage most effectively in politics than by the mediocre gains chalked up during the Clinton years. "If your objective is to innovate and take risks, you move faster with a small group," Gill's political director, Guerriero, told me. "If Columbus had needed a conference call before setting sail for America, he'd still be at the dock." (This kind of gridlock has long hampered the Human Rights Campaign, the country's largest gay political organization.) Though Gill, too, has suffered disappointments, his grand experiment is, for better or worse, more consistent with the pragmatic direction of twenty-first-century politics than anything else on the Democratic horizon. Whether that achievement derives from the unique frustrations within the gay community or from the history and ability of that community to organize to help itself, it is changing gay politics, and it could change Democratic politics as well.

A large part of Gill's credibility stems from the example of his home state. His influence on Colorado's politics has been much more public than his recent national efforts. For years a reliably old-conservative Mountain West enclave, Colorado had a political culture that tended toward libertarianism until, in the 1990s, the

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Republican leadership turned hard to the right. Before he became active in national politics, Gill had been spurred to action locally by the 1992 ballot initiative prohibiting laws to protect gays and lesbians, and his involvement intensified several years later after he was deeply offended by a Republican legislator's introduction of a bill banning any discussion of homosexuality in Colorado's public schools. Since then, Gill has become the top political donor in the state. Aided by his record as a community leader, he has managed to achieve limited victories for gay equality, most notably getting Colorado's socially conservative Republican Governor Bill Owens to agree in 2005 to a bill protecting gays under the state's hate-crimes law.

During this time, Gill formed an alliance with three other major donors (two of them tech moguls, one of them gay) to find a way to moderate the state's politics and loosen the grip of Republican social conservatives. Working in conjunction with progressive groups throughout Colorado, "the Four Millionaires," as they came to be known, built a kind of information-age political machine that enabled Democrats to outspend Republicans for the first time in years.

On Election Day 2004, as George W. Bush carried the state handily, Democrats captured both chambers of the legislature. "There's no doubt that Tim Gill and some of the other wealthy funders contributed mightily to the takeover," Andrew Romanoff, the Democratic speaker of the House, told me. Romanoff believes that voters perceived Republicans as caring more about marginal social issues like gay marriage than about the economic woes hampering the state economy. "The difference between our agenda and theirs was the difference between the kitchen table and the bedroom door." Last fall, Democrats extended their gains in the legislature and captured the governorship as well.

One component of Gill's strategy includes courting that element of the Republican Party that's open to compromise, while at the same time making clear that gay bashing will now come at a price. "You have to create an atmosphere of fear and respect," said Trimpa, "and set up the proper context for them to do the right thing." But neither Gill's checkbook nor the Republicans' woes have stopped social conservatives from pressing their agenda. Last year, when it became clear that Colorado Republicans intended to back a ballot initiative banning gay marriage, Gill and his allies moved first to frame the debate by pushing Referendum I, a bill endorsing domestic partnerships, and spending $5 million to promote it.

This effort also included some shrewd inside maneuvering. Colorado is home to a prominent Christian-right movement, centered on James Dobson's Colorado Springs organization, Focus on the Family. Gays held no realistic hope of defeating the marriage ban. So to create a more favorable environment for domestic partnerships to become law, Gill's operatives worked to divide their opponents into two camps: those conservatives who wanted to ban only marriage but would countenance partnerships, and the rest, like Dobson, who wanted, as Trimpa put it, "to ban the whole ball of wax." They reached an informal truce with the moderate element of the conservative movement to back only the marriage ban and to not oppose the referendum on domestic partnerships. Among this faction's leaders was an adversary of Dobson's within the evangelical community, the Reverend Ted Haggard of the New Life Church.

As I arrived in Denver a week before the election, Haggard's life became a national sensation. He first denied, but later resigned because of, a report that for years he had paid for sex with a gay prostitute through whom he had also bought crystal meth. The story exploded across the state, yielding full-banner headlines for four days running in *The Denver Post* and wall-to-wall footage of Haggard's awkward semi-denial to a local TV news crew.

While the pundits predicted that the scandal would demoralize conservative voters and benefit the state's liberals, Gill's organization held no such illusions. Its polling showed that the vote on domestic partnerships had been running near even, but now this development seemed certain to tip things against them. Trying to explain why, Trimpa characterized it best by grimly invoking "the gay ick"—his rueful term for the tendency of well-meaning and fair-minded straight voters to become turned off when gay issues focus explicitly on sex. The Haggard episode, which fed right into the Mark Foley congressional page scandal then in full bloom, created, Trimpa believed, the worst possible environment in which to put gay-rights issues on the ballot. On Election Day, the initiative failed, 53–47.

To date, twenty-seven of the twenty-eight state ballot initiatives banning gay marriage have been approved, including those in three of the four states last year where Gill funded efforts to oppose them (Arizona voters, with Gill's help, defeated one last November). The losses seem to have neither dulled Gill's resolve nor prompted him to rein in his spending. "As an engineer, I like experiments," he explained. "The only way you find new tools is to take one out and try it, and I'm perfectly happy to be in this for the long haul." His general success in state races has already stimulated plans for a larger target list in 2008 and a seminar, scheduled for next March, to brief interested high-net-worth donors. The challenge, he believes, will be expanding the ranks of donors while maintaining the focus of those who participated last year and now face the ultimate temptation in "glamour giving," the 2008 presidential race. "You hope that the forces of darkness will be the ones distracted by the shiny bauble of the presidency," Gill said. Then he excused himself to continue mapping out a state-by-state conquest that already has advanced gay interests in politics, even as the need for his surreptitious methods suggests how far they still have to go.

Joshua Green is an *Atlantic* senior editor.

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A VERSAILLES-LIKE palace at Broad Town hosts corporate training.

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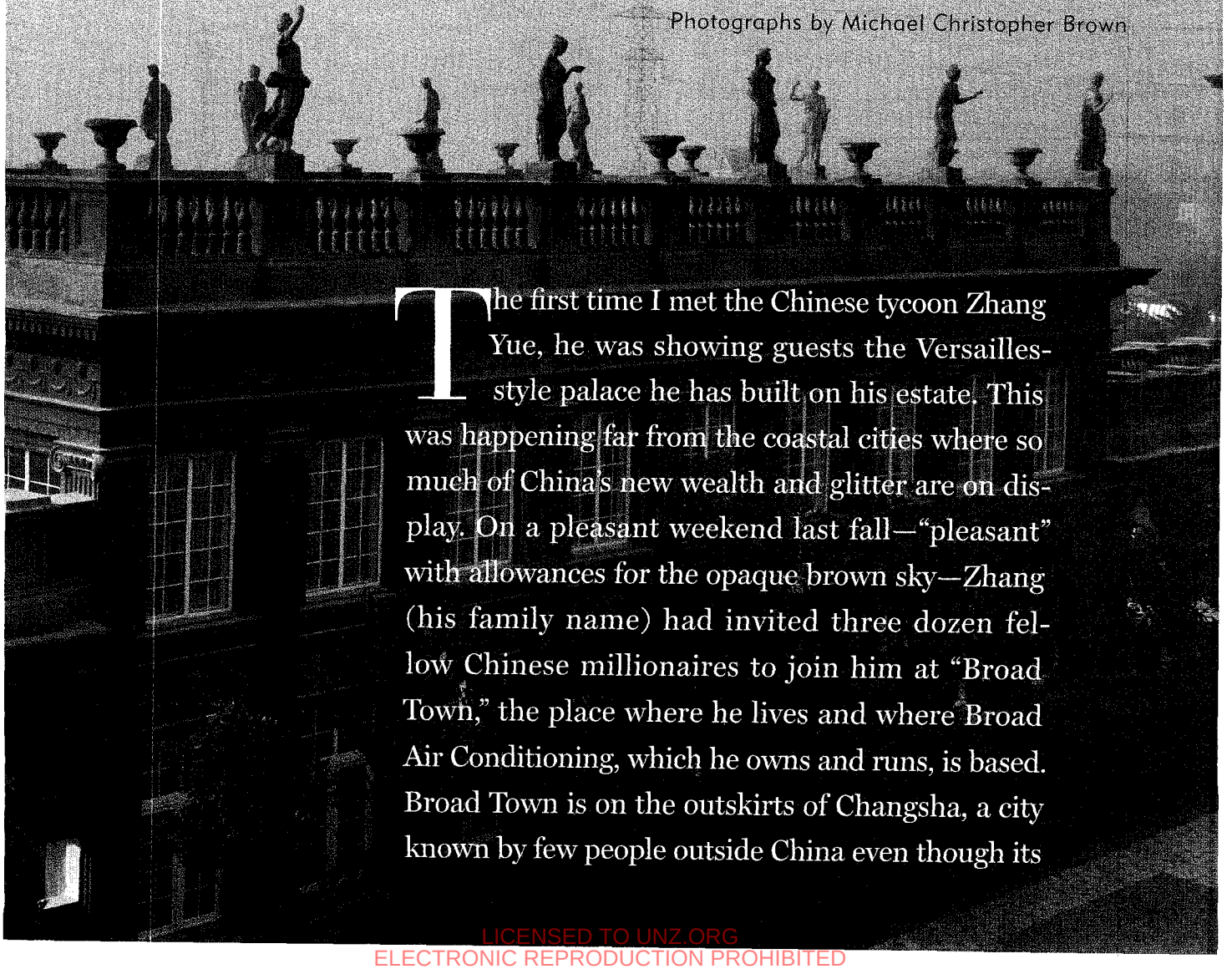
A singing workforce, Mongolian millionaires in Porsches, and saving the planet—inside the empire of a Chinese tycoon with more than money on his mind

BY JAMES FALLOWS

Mr. Zhang Builds His Dream Town

Photographs by Michael Christopher Brown



The first time I met the Chinese tycoon Zhang Yue, he was showing guests the Versailles-style palace he has built on his estate. This was happening far from the coastal cities where so much of China's new wealth and glitter are on display. On a pleasant weekend last fall—"pleasant" with allowances for the opaque brown sky—Zhang (his family name) had invited three dozen fellow Chinese millionaires to join him at "Broad Town," the place where he lives and where Broad Air Conditioning, which he owns and runs, is based. Broad Town is on the outskirts of Changsha, a city known by few people outside China even though its

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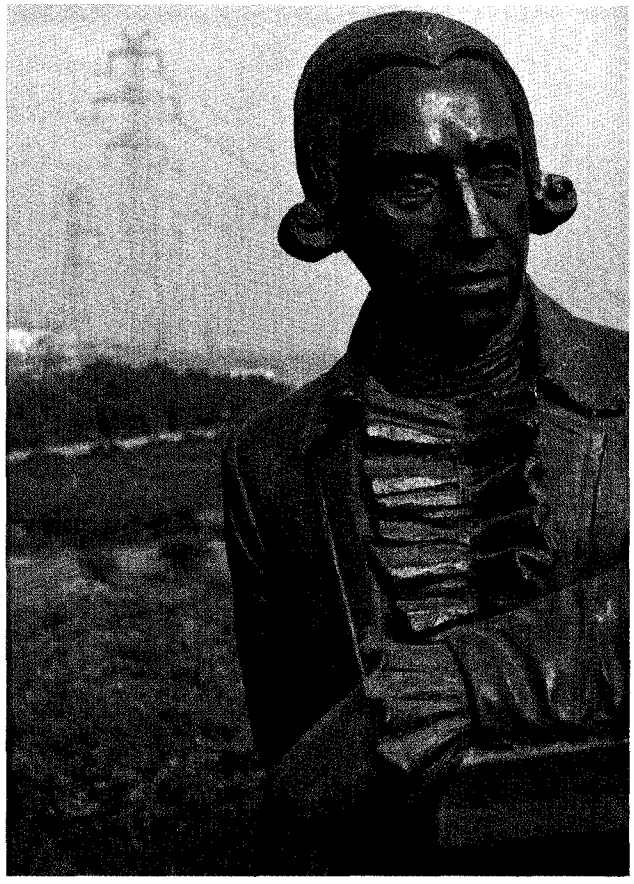
population is roughly as large as New York's. In China, Changsha is famous as the capital of Hunan province and one of the places where the young Mao Zedong lived and worked. A twenty-three-foot-high statue of Mao, long a fixture in the city square, was recently re-covered in pure gold.

The event at Broad Town was a "luxury weekend" organized by Zhang and *Jet Asia-Pacific* magazine, a publication designed to introduce business jets and the associated lifestyle to "Asia-based High Net Worth Individuals" who are newly able to afford such products. Guests were flown in from across China, free, on private jets. On Saturday, foreign airplane manufacturers like Gulfstream, Bombardier, and Cessna displayed their latest products, and the French industrialist Serge Dassault, whose Falcon jets sell for tens of millions of dollars, described the joys of air travel without the airlines. This is largely a theoretical pleasure in China, where the People's Liberation Army still tightly controls airspace and discourages private flights. But a few private jets, among them one owned by Zhang, already crisscross the country, and China's current Five Year Plan calls for airspace controls to be relaxed so a personal-airplane industry can arise. Niu Gengsheng, the CEO of a group that controls one of China's largest dairy-products companies, was among the several guests from Inner Mongolia (charmingly, his family name means "cow"). He told *Jet Asia-Pacific* that the conference had helped him understand "the rationale behind the acquisition of such an essential business tool."

It was the aviation aspect of the event that got me there, by chance. I had agreed to help ferry a small Cirrus airplane that was part of the luxury weekend display from Changsha to its next destination, the Zhuhai Air Show in far southern China, near Macau. (The Cirrus was the same kind of plane I had owned and piloted in the United States.) But the weekend, I learned on arrival in Broad Town, was not just about airplanes. On Saturday evening, after the display, more than fifty guests and exhibitors dined at one long banquet table, in a marble-floored chamber that had been designed by Zhang's wife, Lai Yujing, and resembles a palazzo in Tuscany.

MORE ON THEATLANTIC.COM
For an author-narrated slideshow of Zhang Yue's estate, visit www.theatlantic.com/zhang.

Then on Sunday morning, the guests took test drives in brand-new Porsche racing cars—bright yellow, red, lustrous black—along an improvised course made by closing off a public street adjoining Broad Town. A Hummer was also part of the fleet. As each car rolled in at the end of a circuit, a small clash of cultures could be observed. The Chinese millionaires, used to doing what they wanted the instant it occurred to them, would stride to the driver's side of the car, past anyone who happened to be waiting in line. Then a member of Porsche's professional-driver team would look for a tactful way to guide the guest to the passenger's side for a first, instructional run through the slalom cones and rapid-acceleration zones on the course.



JAMES WATT, the English inventor, and an Egyptian pyramid are among Broad Town's historical figures and buildings.

After a few hours of driving, the guests went to Broad Town's Mediterranean Club, which had one wood-paneled room full of long, narrow felt-covered tables for snooker and a similar room with squarer, squatter felt-covered tables for playing pool. (Plus bowling alleys, a vast and modern indoor swimming pool, antique Chinese furniture and statues, and so forth; the facilities are open to all company employees.) A huge video screen at the back of the room ran footage about Sunseeker motor yachts, the maritime equivalent of private jets. On leather seats in the clubhouse's bar, the guests sat down to a tasting of $250-a-bottle French wine, poured by a young duo from Hong Kong. One of the wine merchants was British and looked like Prince William; as he described each wine in Chinese, his partner, a chic Chinese woman, went around the room pouring the wine. A few minutes into the tasting, the guests were summoned for lunch, and they carried along their glasses of 1994 Château Latour to enjoy with mouth-burning Hunan dishes.

After lunch, Zhang thanked the guests for coming and invited them to spend time seeing some of the other highlights of Broad Town: the 130-foot-high gold-colored replica of an Egyptian pyramid, for instance, or the life-sized bronze statues of forty-three inspirational leaders from different eras and different cultures, from Confucius and Socrates to the Wright Brothers, Mahatma Gandhi, Rachel Carson, and Jack Welch. Later in the afternoon, one of the

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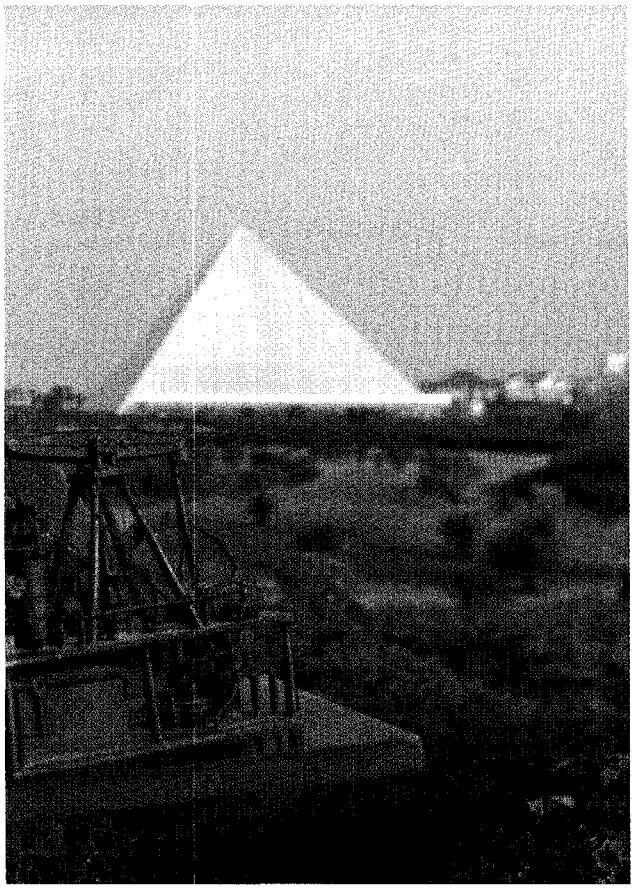

company helicopters came in for a landing not far from the Mediterranean Club. A group of guests ran toward the helipad to meet it—Zhang, in shirt and tie, running faster than anyone else, and grinning like a happy little boy.

The next time I met Zhang Yue was in Shanghai, at the China International Luxury Property Show, where resort properties from around the world—villas in France, ski lodges in Canada—were up for sale. His company was displaying its new line of home air conditioners in a small structure that got a large amount of attention because of two young female Broad employees who stood on its roof in skintight white bare-midriff outfits, playing electric violin and viola on numbers ranging from Bach to Grace Jones. (Or appearing to play: they were actually violin-synching—not that anyone cared.)

Zhang breezed smilingly past me and another foreigner who had come to see him. "Five minutes!" he said in Chinese, and spent the next half hour roaming through the display and pointing out to the dozen uniformed staff members every detail that could be improved. The Broad staffers stood at attention while listening, notebook in left hand and pen in right, as if trained in that pose—as I later learned they were.

A week later I saw Zhang Yue again, back at Broad Town. I had spent the previous night in the on-campus hotel, sans Internet or telephone, feeling remote from my known world. Then I ran into engineers from Trinidad, Russia, and Argentina who were in Broad Town for several weeks of lessons on maintaining Broad systems in their home countries. Like the 1,800 regular employees of the company, they were living next to the factory in Broad Town housing and eating three meals a day, free, in the company cafeteria, in a building with the English name Aspiration Theater. Unlike the 1,800, they were neither delighted by the prospect of Chinese food twenty-one times a week nor able to communicate easily in Chinese. "Remote!" a man from Trinidad scoffed when I told him the way I was feeling, and set off into an I'll-show-you-*remote* soliloquy.

The next morning, I toured the factory where locomotive-sized institutional air conditioners were prepared for shipment to India, Germany, the United States, or one of forty other countries. I saw the company's "Aviation Division," where maintenance men kept Zhang's helicopter ready in case he wanted to make a trip. I saw the laboratory, and the warehouse, and the NORAD-style control room, where a team of technicians watched readouts from every large-scale Broad system installed in a hotel, office building, shopping mall, or airport anywhere in the world. While I watched, the display switched from a hotel in Manhattan to the international airport in Madrid to a new structure in Beijing.

Then it was time to interview the creator and owner of it all, whom I invariably heard referred to in Broad Town as "our chairman." Chairman Zhang strolled without formality or entourage into a tea-break room where I was sitting, slapped me on the back, and spent the next half hour grilling me, through an interpreter, about ... airplanes. He loves flying, and he was the first person in China to buy a private jet. According to a Broad representative, he was also the first person in China to be certified as a private pilot, and while he rarely flies his airplanes himself anymore, he remains an aviation enthusiast. Now he wanted a new airplane. No—as an environmentalist, he *needed* a new airplane, one that was much more energy-efficient than the ones he now had. To be specific, he needed one that would go at least 300 miles an hour and get at least fifteen miles to a gallon of jet fuel. Zhang had lectured Dassault, the French aircraft baron, on the need to create such a plane. Zhang usually went by himself on business trips, so for efficiency he would be happy with a plane that had only two or three seats (plus one for a hired pilot). Since I had once written a book about airplanes, I should tell him which one to buy!

I delicately asked whether he needed such a plane now, or could wait two or three years for one of the many small jets currently being developed. Without waiting for translation he said, in Chinese, "Now! Now!" As I began to say (gulp) that no such plane existed at the moment, I saw his face cloud. So I backtracked and said I would call a friend at NASA who was the world's expert on exciting new aircraft, to see if he knew of one. Fine! said Zhang. Let's call him now! Well, it was 3:30 a.m. on the U.S. East Coast. Maybe we could wait an hour or two?

Airplanes deferred for the moment, Zhang spent half an hour talking about himself, his company, and his vision

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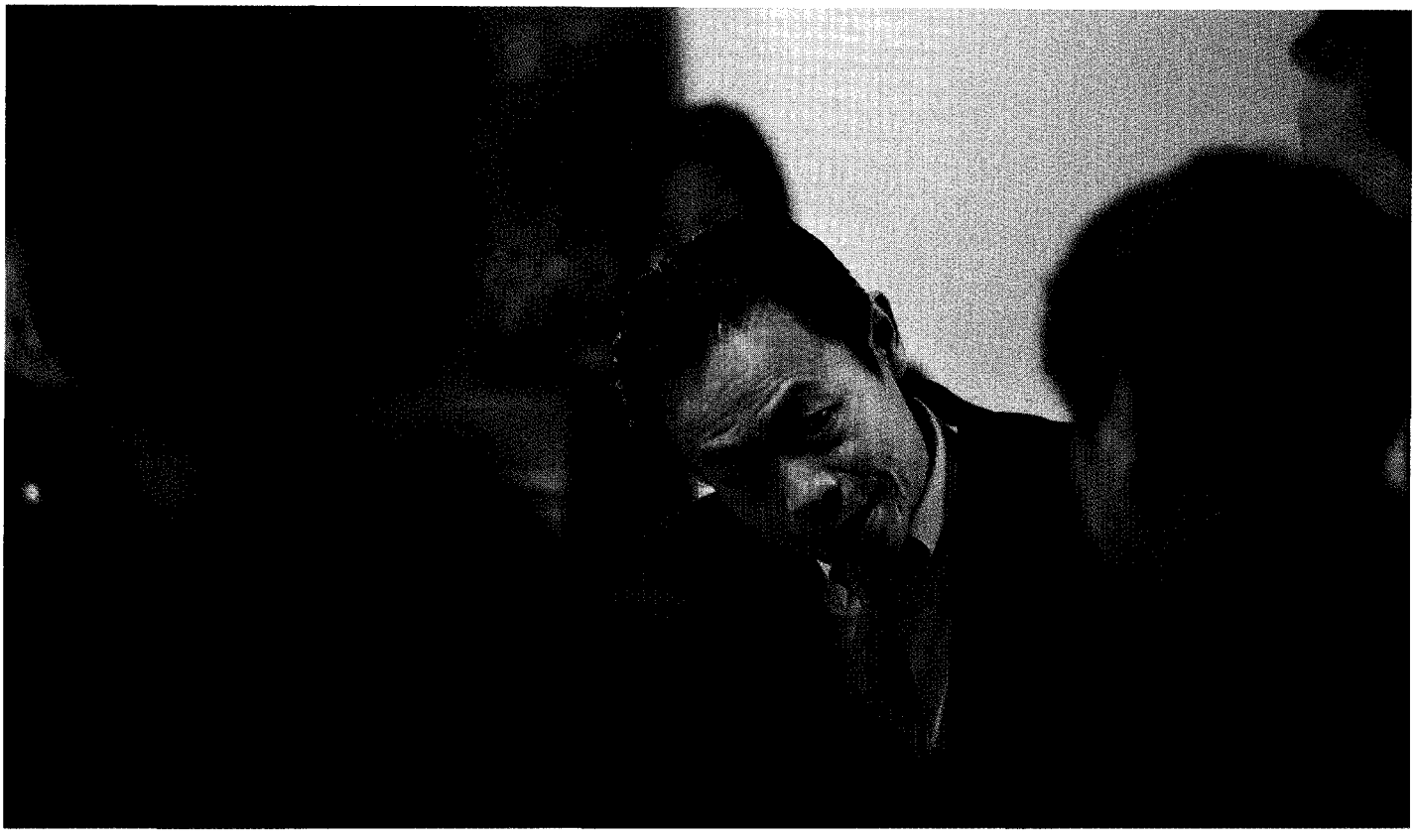

ZHANG YUE leading a tour of Broad Town

for China. Every second of that time, he was in motion around the room, talking as if dictating to scriveners. Zhang Yue is a short, very trim man, forty-six years old; his black hair appears undyed, and his face is youthful and smooth. "I have not taken a medicine in eighteen years!" he said at one point with pride. Nervous energy may be the key to his fitness. Like many Chinese nouveaux riches (I am told), he is impatient and indulged. Unlike many American plutocrats, he has no formality or stuffiness. I enjoyed being with him. Suddenly he decided that he'd had enough—and with a reminder that we'd meet that evening, after I called my NASA friend, he was gone.

China, like America, is too big, complicated, and contradictory to have any "typical" or representative character. Zhang Yue is no more representative of today's China than a fur merchant like John Jacob Astor or a press baron like William Randolph Hearst was representative of the America of his time. But certain prominent characters are interesting because they are so clearly *of* their culture's moment in history. Astor was of the era in which natural resources were being turned into fortunes, and those fortunes turned into social standing. Hearst built his fortune in the age of large urban markets and converted it, with mixed results, into political influence and the artistic legacy of his castle. Zhang is of the moment when China has opened the door to ambitious people with entrepreneurial plans. And to me he is more interesting than many others superficially like him, because he suggests an answer to one fundamental question about the China of the era to come. The question is what China will dream of, as its dreams of money begin to be realized. Most people will be poor, far into the future. But tens of millions of Chinese are already able to think of more than just getting by. Zhang, it turned out, had more than making money and buying as-yet-undeveloped planes on his mind.

ZHANG OF THE BUSINESS WORLD

Depending on the rankings, Zhang Yue stands somewhere between twenty-fifth and fiftieth on the list of the richest people in China, with assets worth as much as $300 million; Broad Air Conditioning has no debt, and last year it had annual sales of about $300 million. His wealth does not appear to be based principally on political connections, which have obviously been crucial in the formation of other empires—in real estate, construction, and broadcasting, for example. Indeed, Broad has been discussed in Chinese business blogs, which I've seen in translation, as proof that a business can thrive while keeping government more or less at arm's length.

The company's English name is derived, perhaps too literally, from its Chinese name *Yuan Da*, which might also have been rendered as "expansive" or "spacious." The company's logo—the familiar @ sign, but with the *a* in the middle replaced by a lowercase *b*, for *Broad*—is elegant

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and eye-catching; Zhang designed it in 1990, before e-mail made the "at" symbol common. Among the six "Broad Values" that Zhang says must guide the company, one is "Don't pay bribes" and another is "Do pay taxes." (The others are environmental protection, respect for intellectual-property rights, no price gouging, and no predatory competition.)

Nor does Broad aim to beat its competitors with a lowball "China price" that manufacturers in developed countries cannot match. According to a quite respectful case study of Broad used at the Harvard Business School, the company's prospects have been closely tied to the technological niche that Zhang has insisted it occupy. Broad's specialty is a form of air-conditioning that uses less energy than conventional means. Broad did not invent the technology on which its business is based, but it did take the risk of investing heavily in an approach that companies in Japan, Korea, Europe, and North America had looked at and neglected.

The company and its CEO came to their current identities through an indirect route. Zhang grew up near Changsha, studied art in college, and began work as an interior decorator in southern China. His younger brother Jian trained as an engineer at Harbin Institute of Technology, in Manchuria. In the late 1980s, as Deng Xiao Ping opened China seriously for business, Jian, in his mid-twenties, patented the invention that got the company started. This was a "pressure-free boiler" for factories, and its main selling point was that if anything went wrong, the boiler would collapse rather than explode. Such explosions were common in China; demand was brisk. Using the roughly $3,000 Zhang Yue had saved from his decorating business, the brothers went into business selling boilers and consulting on factory design.

By 1992, they had decided to concentrate on what is now Broad's entire business: "nonelectric refrigeration." The air conditioners most Americans are familiar with are compression coolers. They use electric power to compress a refrigerant such as Freon, and when the refrigerant expands, it cools the surrounding air. The nonelectric coolers instead use natural gas (or some other source of heat) to boil a special liquid, a lithium bromide solution, and when the vapors from that solution condense, they cool whatever is near them.

It sounds odd to use a flame to cool a building—and, indeed, when China's premier, Wen Jiabao, visited Broad Town in 2005, he asked several times to have the principle explained. A company pamphlet that lovingly commemorates this historic visit calls the premier's persistent curiosity a sure sign of his acumen. "If I spread a drop of alcohol on your hand, you will feel very cold," Zhang told Wen, describing part of the cooling process. The account continues: "The Premier nodded in understanding and said, 'Yes! Yes! For it evaporates and takes away the heat.' The Premier is a specialist indeed."

Zhang has never wavered from this technology, even when, in the early 2000s, market conditions temporarily turned against it and his sales force begged him to add normal, electric-powered air conditioners to Broad's offerings. Its advantages all involve energy savings. Compared with typical compression systems, nonelectric air-conditioning as Broad makes it will always require less energy per unit of cooling, because when energy is converted from one form to another, some of it is lost. Electric-compression cooling requires more stages of conversion—fossil fuel to electricity at the power plant, electricity to mechanical power at the compressor, both stages very wasteful—than does using natural gas to boil liquid. Nonelectric cooling will also always be more adaptable to other sources of energy, since it is easier to apply a variety of heat sources, including solar power and biomass burning, to do the boiling than to use them to generate electricity in a remote plant and transmit it to the air-conditioning site. And this method of cooling helps reduce the costly peak loads imposed on the power grid, because natural gas is cheapest and most abundant in the summer, exactly when the demand for air-conditioning goes up. Indeed, since storing natural gas is expensive and difficult, in many countries the available gas is simply burned off—wasted—during the summer, when no one needs it for heating. In China, air-conditioning accounts for as much as 50 percent of the electric load during peak times in the summer. Zhang pointed out to me—as he has noted in countless speeches, and as is emphasized by the Harvard Business School case study—that with all of these advantages, his kind of air-conditioning can make both the electric and the natural-gas networks less wasteful while still keeping people cool in the summer. And while we're at it: the nonelectric systems use a relatively benign natural salt (lithium bromide) rather than using—and inevitably releasing—Freon and other chlorine-based products that erode the Earth's ozone layer.

Employees are like an army in mufti. They eat, work, and sleep on the base—I mean, the factory grounds.

The company made its first big sale of air conditioners in China, in 1992. As construction throughout China boomed, so did Broad's business—partly because installing

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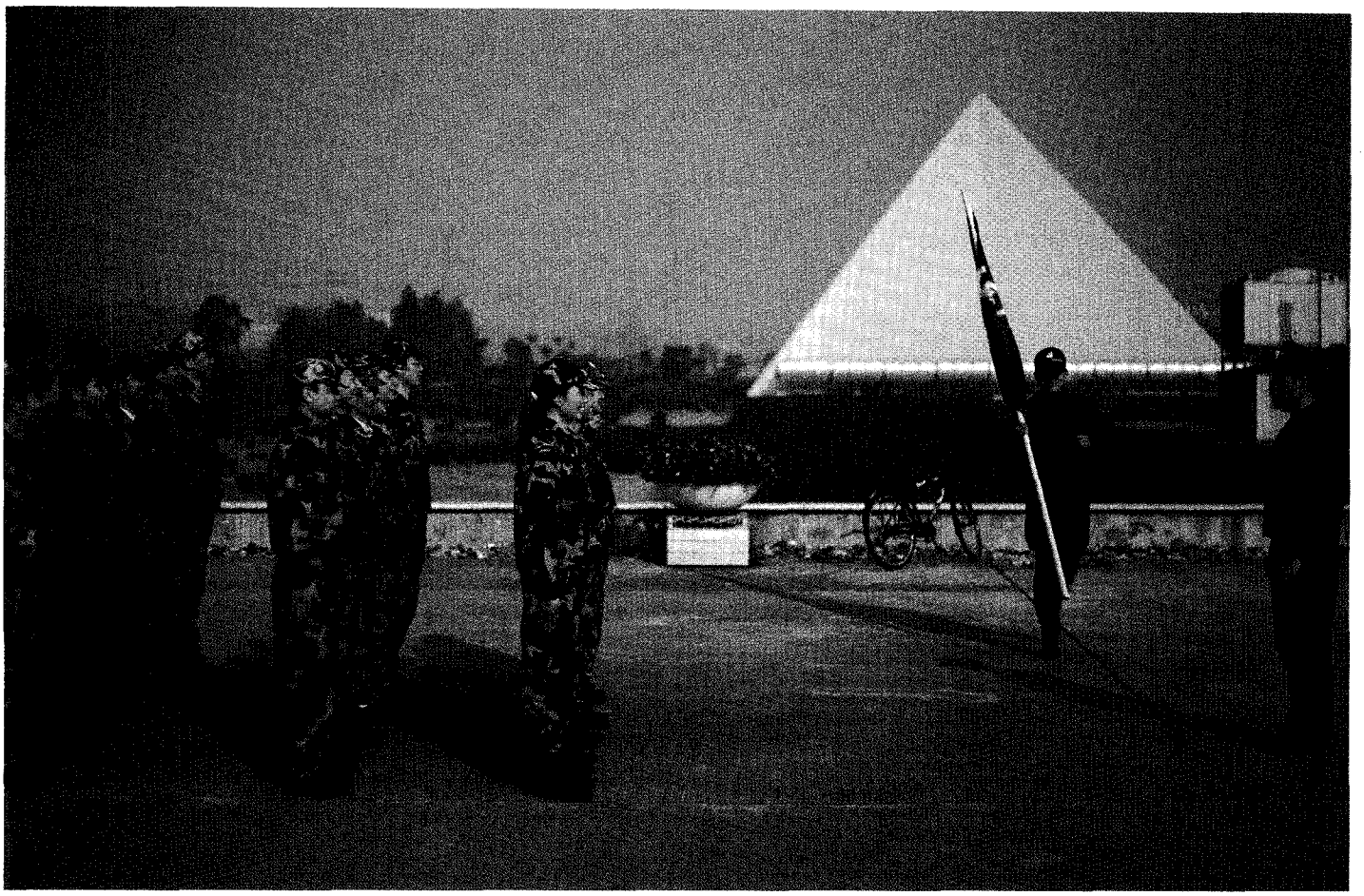

NEW EMPLOYEES go through a ten-day session of boot camp, divided into platoons and living in barracks.

the system required little paperwork or official approval, compared with what was required for electric units, which would draw on the power grid. It succeeded overseas in India, Pakistan, and other countries with shaky electric systems, since the natural-gas-powered cooler would run during a brownout. "Japanese companies did poorly in markets like those, because their systems were designed for clean water and good management," Sean Wang, who handles Broad's international accounts, told me. "Ours were designed with the assumption of worse conditions and looser management."

Broad made its first American sale in 1999, a combined heating-cooling system at a medical center in downtown Boston. It pushed hard into the California market after the blackouts of 2000–2001, it equipped a community college in New Jersey, and it arrived in New York: Near Zhang's office is a large picture of a Broad cooler in a Con Edison plant in Manhattan. "Thomas Edison is our idol," Wang said. The company competed for, and won, Department of Energy contracts to demonstrate energy-saving techniques, notably a major project in Austin, Texas. It now has more than 200 installations in the United States, including at Fort Bragg and other military bases, and many hundreds more around the world, including in the new airport facilities in Madrid, Athens, and Bangkok.

In 2001, '02, '04, and '05, Broad was was named one of the "20 Most Admired Companies in China" by China's *Economic Observer* weekly. I thought of asking Zhang: What happened in 2003? But I only thought it.

ZHANG: UTOPIAN OR TYRANT?

The first time I was in an office building at Broad Town, a European friend who has lived in China for years nudged me and asked, What don't you see? I looked around and realized: I didn't see piles of junk.

There were no scrap papers, cigarette butts, half-empty teacups, or other debris on the Broad Town desks, which made it different from other places I had seen in China. What was true in the office was true of the factory as well: no heaps of spare parts or scrap metal, no workers holding welding guns while standing barefoot, no oily rags looking as if they were about to burst into flames. What I had seen in many other Chinese worksites fit the motto "If it's worth doing, it's worth doing sloppily." But when I saw a gardener kneeling on one of Broad Town's sweeping lawns and resodding a small plot of grass practically blade by blade, I realized: This is like Japan!

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Those would be fighting words in much of China, so let me be precise: The people working at Broad Town seemed not just to be holding jobs but to have been made into a culture and team. Japan's thoroughgoing organization of people into large teams—the Mitsubishi team, the Toyota team—often seems like a peacetime military. At Broad Town the connection is more explicit. New recruits go through a ten-day session of literal boot camp, wearing military-style outfits and living in barracks on the grounds. They run in platoons through Broad Town's streets in fatigues, behind an instructor carrying a unit flag. Many of the blog-world concerns about Broad involve recruits who drop out during the training—or are summarily dismissed, for versions of "bad attitude."

After demobilization into the regular workforce, employees are like an army in mufti. They eat, work, and sleep on the base—I mean, the factory grounds. They are roused each morning at 6:00 for physical training before the workday begins. Zhang and his wife and son live at Broad Town too, as do his parents, in houses tucked behind the fishpond that helps supply the company cafeteria. White-collar workers, male and female, wear a blue-blazer uniform every day, as does Zhang. Factory workers wear royal-blue uniforms with their employee number stenciled in large digits down one leg. Every Monday morning the workforce musters for the raising of the national and company flags. When I asked Sean Wang about the clean factories and overall air of control, he said, "We want to solve problems at their root." He was talking about how a little bit of dirt in the factory could lead to big, expensive problems later on, but the point seemed to apply more generally. It was a one-company illustration of what former Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and others have called the Asian social bargain: less individual latitude, more collective success.

I heard from a former factory worker that pay for blue-collar workers, nearly all of them male, starts at 1,200 yuan per month, or about $150. That's not bad by Chinese factory standards—especially considering that Changsha is a low-cost area, and Broad workers get their food and housing free. I've visited factories near Shanghai and Guangzhou where monthly wages started at 900 yuan. Zhou Wei, of Broad, declined to comment on pay levels in the company, but I heard that white-collar workers started at around 2,000 yuan per month. In theory, Chinese law requires companies to pay overtime to anyone working more than forty hours in a week. Some managers of North American–, Japanese-, or European-owned companies with Chinese plants have mentioned to me that they obey this rule. It hardly ever comes up in discussions with companies from mainland China, Taiwan, or Singapore. At Broad the rule seems to be "Work till the job is done." I met some former employees who said that they typically had two days off per month; often worked till midnight; and survived by shoveling down food as quickly as they could and then using the rest of their lunch and dinner breaks, two hours apiece, for sleep. They weren't complaining: this is modern China.

As will be obvious by now, there are things both admirable and creepy about this utopia. In every way possible, Zhang has isolated the culture of Broad Town from influences other than his own. He has no public shareholders to second-guess his choices—whether to stick to environmentally friendly products or to build a pyramid—nor even bankers holding debt. He has distanced the company from governmental control as much as any Chinese company owner can. His workers are physically distant from the distractions of Changsha—and that city itself is distant from the thriving metropolises of the coast. The same blogs that complain about imposed cult-like behavior at Broad acknowledge that the jobs pay well enough that plenty of new applicants are always willing to put on military uniforms and live their lives at Broad Town.

The first time I was in an office building at Broad Town, a European friend nudged me and asked, What don't you see? I looked around and realized: I didn't see piles of junk.

The positive aspect of this invented world is its ambition for something more than sheer efficiency and success. The entire workforce also musters for musical events. Many employees play musical instruments, and apparently all can, or do, sing. On December 31, 1999, Zhang had all of his workers stand in front of the then half-finished Versailles to be photographed singing in the new millennium. (The palace now serves as a "management training center," for meetings and seminars; the pyramid's interior is being fitted out as an environmental museum.) The inspirational sayings carved on nearly every wall could sound like corporate boilerplate. From the founder of Toyota: "There is no boat that cannot be sunk" (Moral: Don't let up). But the walls also bear sayings from Abraham Lincoln and other non-corporate figures. Among those honored with statues are Winston Churchill, the Chinese poet Li Bai, and Martin Luther

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King Jr. Zhang has not forgotten his background as an artist, and he is renowned for fussing over every design detail of every feature of Broad Town.

When I asked him a more polite version of what any visitor would wonder—*What is the deal* with the pyramid?—Zhang said: "Our products are to make people comfortable and happy. If our employees are comfortable and happy, that will affect their work ethic and their professionalism." He said that good food matters—and the food at Broad Town is good. So does a visually pleasant environment—and most vistas in this controlled landscape are pleasant. "Many companies in China are looking only for the short-term profit," he said in conclusion. "Some of our expenditures are not directly for manufacture and sales, but our vision is long term, and we believe that indirectly they will increase manufacture and sales." And even if the steps don't pay off, in the end it's his company, and like utopians before him, he seems to consider it another work of art.

ZHANG AND INCONVENIENT TRUTHS

If I had asked my European friend what he was seeing but not noticing at Broad Town, the answer should have been: wood. Polished, attractive wood shows up in every structure. Clean, gleaming wood floors and beams in a lovely Japanese house, built (for no apparent reason) as part of a "Global Village" of housing styles from around the world. Wooden parquet floors and walls in a gymnasium for badminton and Ping-Pong. Wooden furniture in many of the offices. Dark wood paneling in the Mediterranean Club. Wood-block flooring throughout. If China was ever rich in timber resources, it certainly is not now. Why should a heavy-industry facility use so much expensive wood?

Because it was free. All of the wood was recycled from shipping pallets and packing crates coming into the factory. Where it came from before that is another matter, but once it got to Broad Town, it was carefully reprocessed and reused—all at the insistence of Zhang Yue.

There is a showboat aspect to Broad Town's recycling effort—every person I met there told me the story of the packing crates. And the Porsches roaring through town over the luxury weekend did not quite fit Zhang's message that people should be conscious of their environmental impact at all times. But in fairness, when the United Nations Environment Program held a forum at Broad Town in 2003, Zhang argued that worldwide, systematic changes—in energy, packaging, and transportation—were essential so consumers could "enjoy a comfortable yet moderate life." And when we finally reached my friend from NASA, around 6:30 a.m. EST, Zhang grilled him (through an interpreter) about the most efficient engines on the market—and lit up when he heard about a radically more efficient airplane being made in Austria. His company got its start partly because China was growing too fast for its own electric grid. Over the last decade he has read constantly about environmental problems and has come up with serious-sounding proposals for what his company, his country, and the world could do.

Solar-energy collectors are everywhere in Broad Town. Part of boot-camp indoctrination is training employees about environmental issues. When the company sells a cooling unit, it also offers guidance on reducing demand for air-conditioning. "For years the Chinese government focused only on economic development, but now they say that the environment and the economy should both be stressed," Zhang told me. "But really the environment needs to be in first place, and economic growth in fourth." Not seeing the trap, I asked what should come second and third. "The environment, and the environment!" he said. "The real measure of our economic progress is the life people can live, and the [gross domestic product] does not measure that." He observed that a ton of dirty coal might bring 120 yuan, or $15, in profit—but recent studies had shown that a ton of coal cost at least 200 yuan in medical care for inhabitants of the bleak, cancer-ridden mining towns. "Any primary-school child can see what's wrong with that," Zhang said. "But our economists can't."

For another international conference on the environment, Zhang prepared a captivating and unintentionally revealing document called "The World in 2015." Part of it is quiet Chinese triumphalism: the world's largest trading zone will be in Asia; the international currency will be not the U.S. dollar but the Asian dollar; the world's most popular movie will be a drama set in ancient China. The world's most profitable and admired company will not be one that sells computers or airplanes or oil but one that quietly economizes on energy use around the world, starting with new air-conditioning systems. "This company still has little reputation, for they have done those things others don't care about ... It doesn't matter that people may not know the name of this company, but they should know it is a Chinese company."

The conclusion of the imagined history involves a historic UN speech by another of Zhang's idols: "Albert Gore, sixty-seven years old, walked slowly to the platform. This old man, who became Secretary-General of the UN one year ago, has a dull look in his eyes." Why had no one heeded his warnings when there was time? Why did the world keep building more coal and nuclear plants, instead of noticing what was happening to its climate and learning to conserve? "Choked with sobs, Secretary [Gore] cannot speak." At last he finds his voice and challenges mankind, in the final words of Zhang's essay, "to choose the establishment of the new moral ideal with higher standards."

Subtle? No. Consistent with every detail of Zhang's daily life? Probably not. But as an indication that more than pure moneymaking is under way, it is worth noticing. China will bring more than mere commerce to the world.

James Fallows is an *Atlantic* national correspondent.

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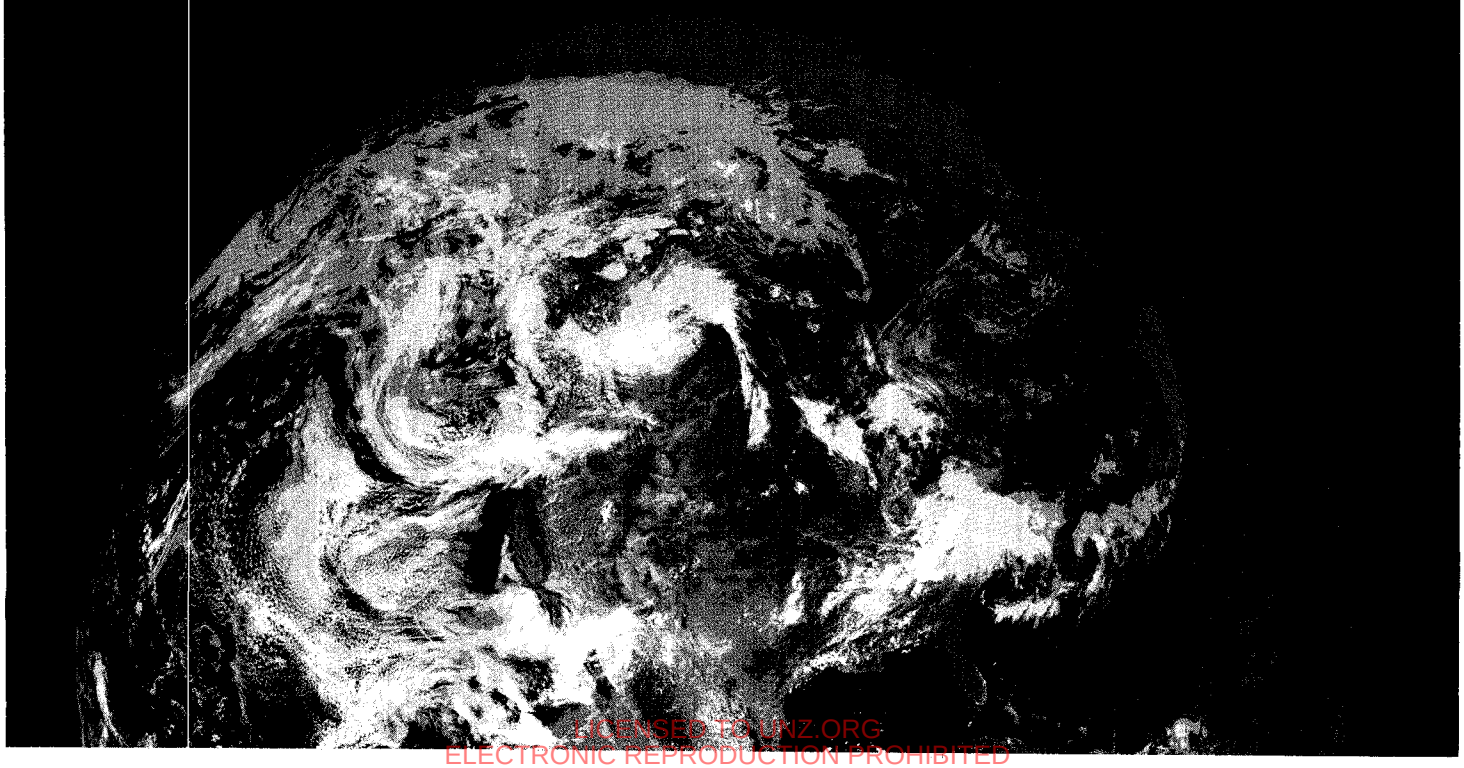

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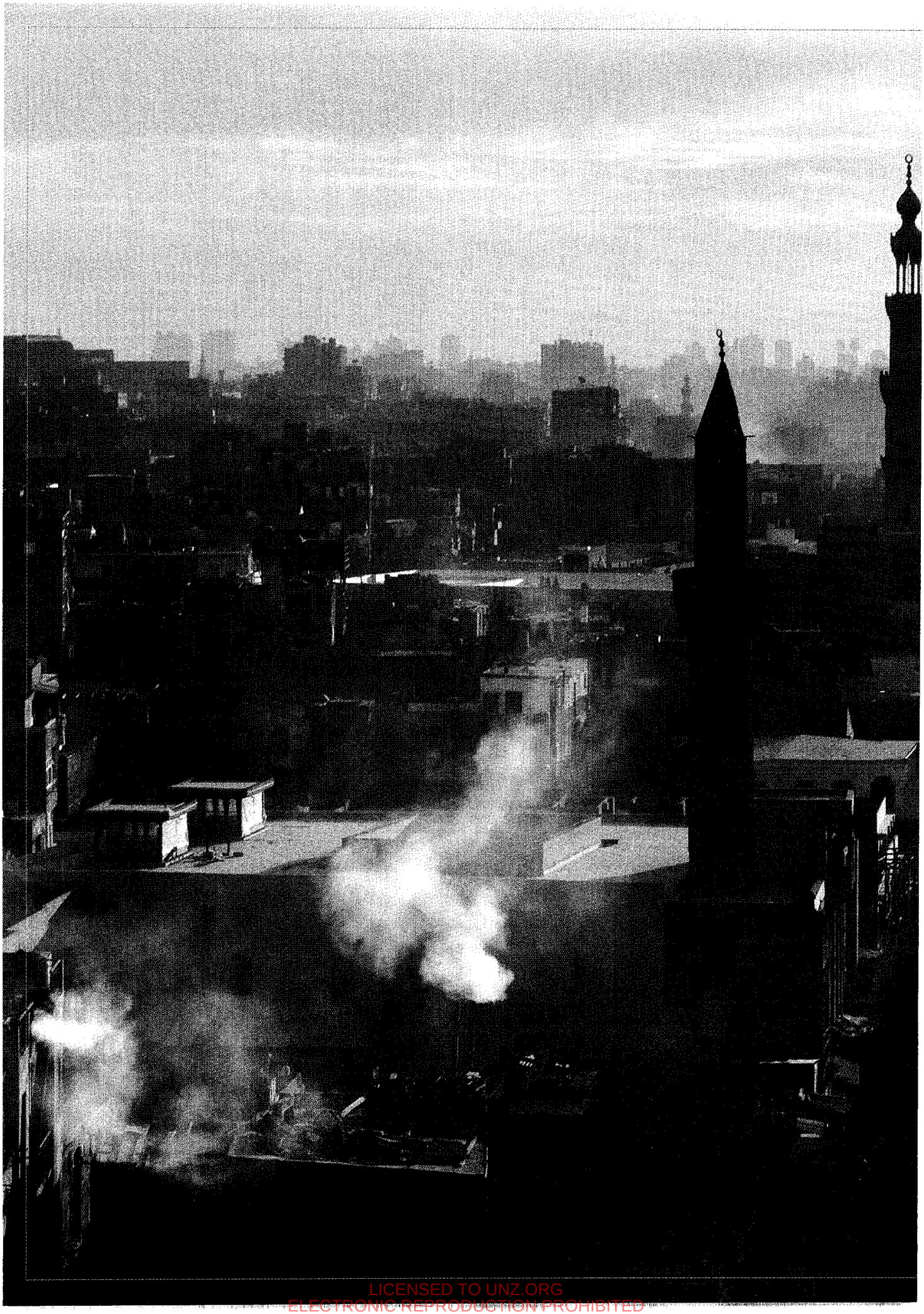

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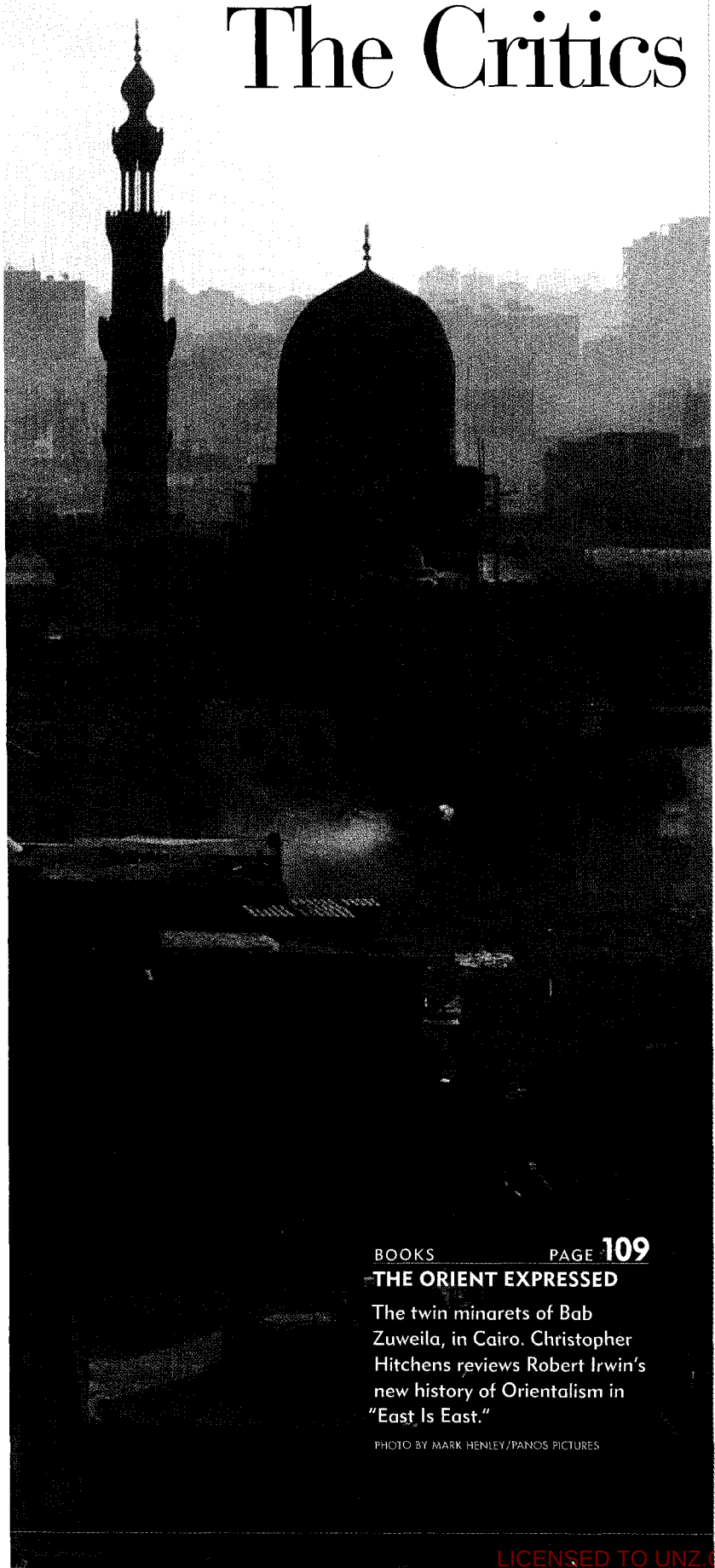

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THE ORIENT EXPRESSED

The twin minarets of Bab Zuweila, in Cairo. Christopher Hitchens reviews Robert Irwin's new history of Orientalism in "East Is East."

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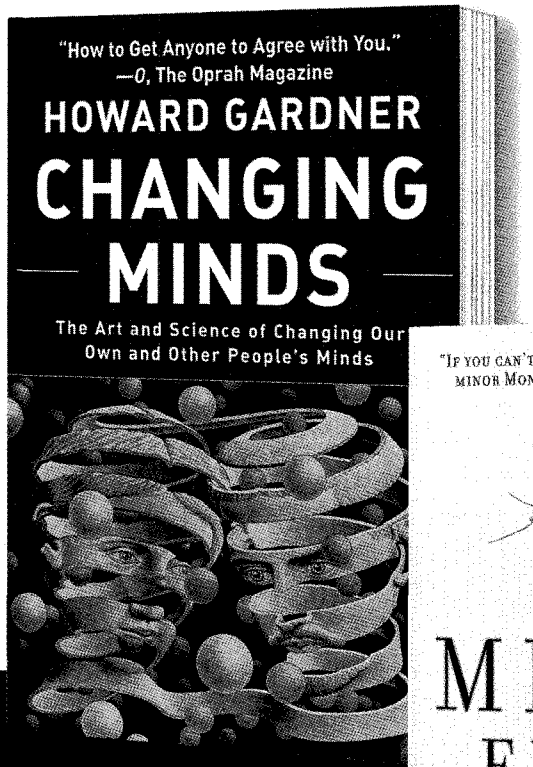

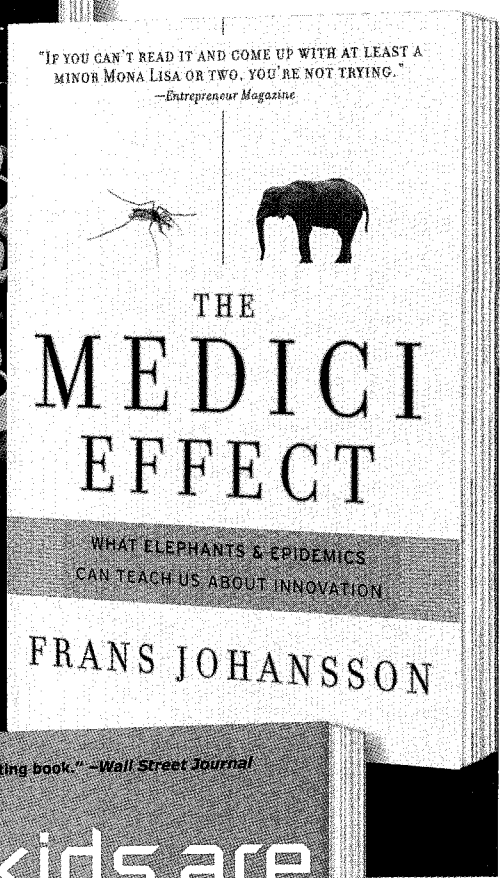

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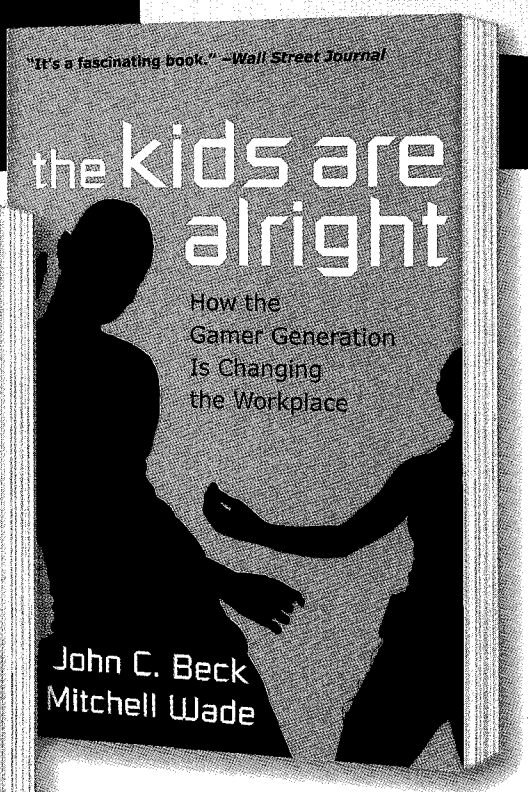

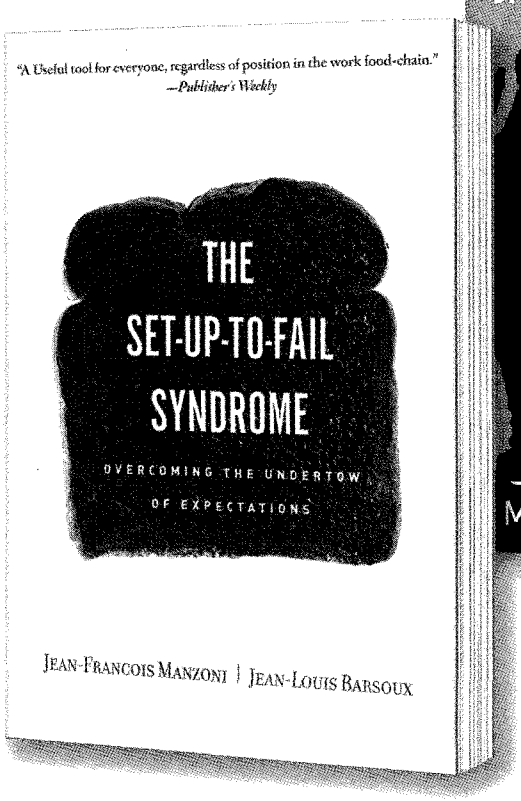

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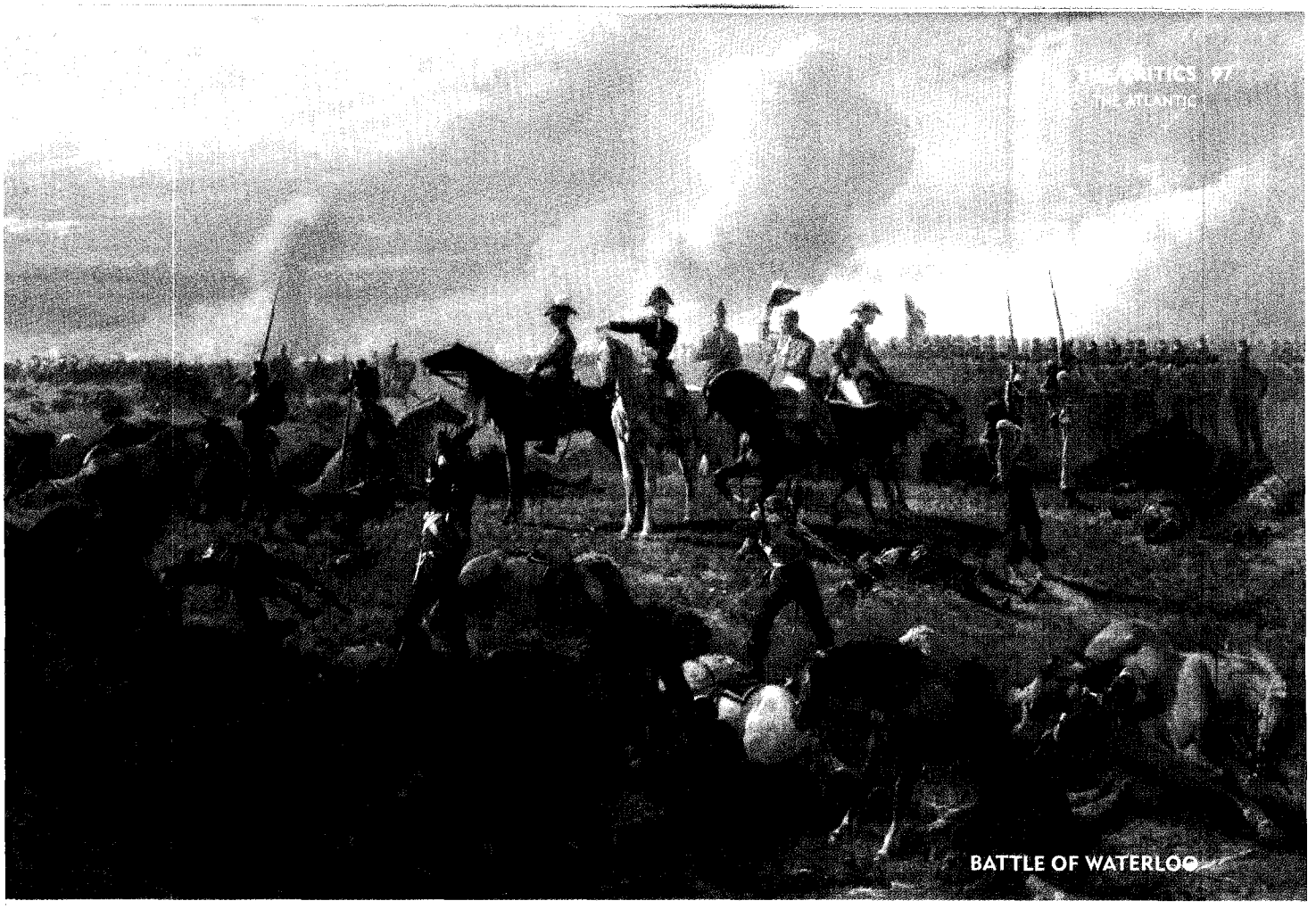

BATTLE OF WATERLOO

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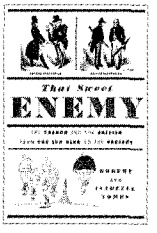
EDITOR'S CHOICE

What to read this month

Of Rivals and Revivals

BY BENJAMIN SCHWARZ

Sometime intimate foes, sometime bitter allies, France and Britain have for centuries largely defined themselves in relation to each other. This remarkably inventive, stylish, and audacious work traces the history of that infernal couple, from the seventeenth century to the present. Probing national culture and sensibility as well as war, diplomacy, and finance, the authors (husband and wife—he's a Cambridge don who has written a pathbreaking study of the Paris Commune; she's a French-born historian of Britain who works at the Foreign Office) assay the entire 300-plus years in their nearly 800-page history, but they focus on what scholars call the "Second Hundred Years' War": the period of intermittent conflict between 1689 and 1815, which started when William III summoned a "Grand Alliance" to thwart the Sun King's bid for European mastery and ended with Wellington's defeat of Napoleon, a defeat that permanently blunted and diverted France's power and international ambitions.



THAT SWEET ENEMY

by Robert and Isabelle Tombs

Knopf

These were struggles on an appalling scale: The years between 1688 and the Peace of Utrecht in 1713 claimed the lives of some 2 million combatants; the death toll in Marlborough's victory at the Battle of Malplaquet, in 1709, matched that of the first day of the Somme; the Napoleonic Wars cost France 1.4 million men and Britain some 200,000. They were also of a global scope: During the Seven Years' War (which Winston Churchill called the true "first world war"), French and British soldiers fought each other in the Ohio Valley, on the Mediterranean, and on the plains of Plassey, in India, among other places. And hence they were phenomenally expensive: Just maintaining Nelson's flagship, the HMS *Victory*, over its lifespan cost as much as "the annual budget of a small state"; owing to the wars against France, Britain raised taxes

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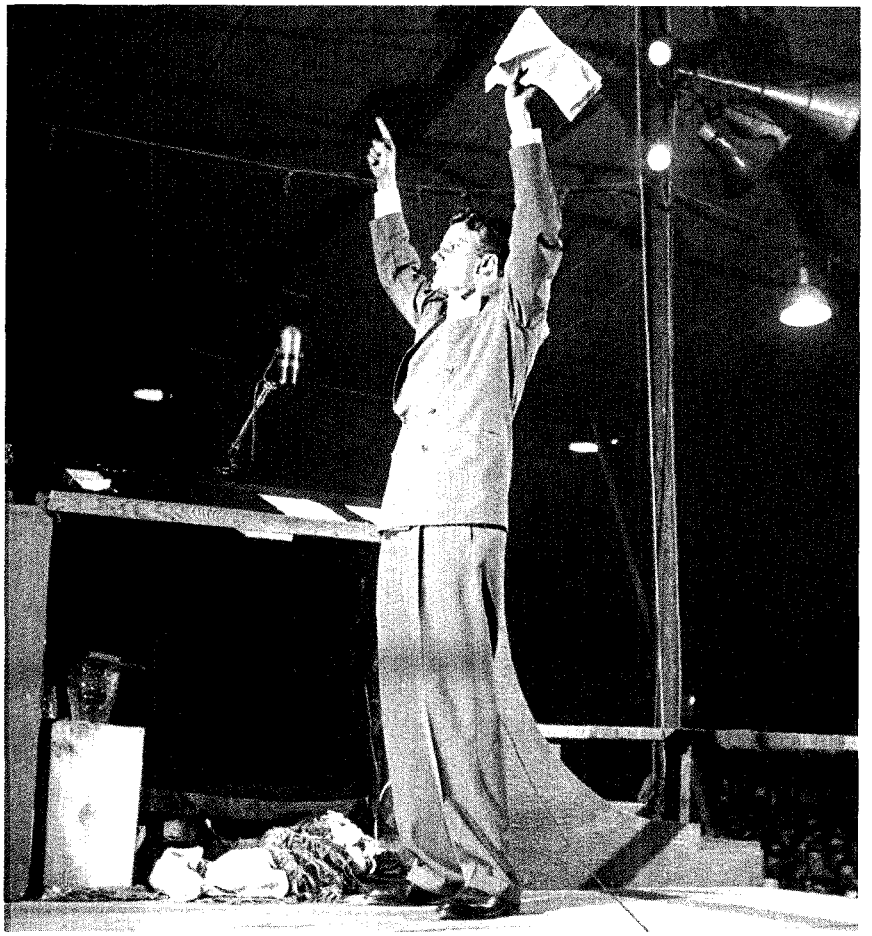
by 1,600 percent between 1689 and 1815, and government borrowing increased by 24,000 percent.

Synthesizing a generation of scholarship on the rise of the "military-fiscal state," by such historians as John Brewer, Paul Langford, and N. A. M. Rodger, the Tombses breezily explicate how, in a somewhat circular process, Britain's naval contest with France—which Rodger has called "the largest, longest, most complex and expensive project ever undertaken by the British state and society"—demanded a transformation in public finance, which in turn spurred the commercial and industrial revolutions that would propel Britain to its economic and geopolitical ascendancy. But as important, the authors deftly shift from money and high politics to social and cultural matters, as they discern, with sharp eyes and tart wit, how such developments as divergent infantry tactics both reflected and shaped national self-images and notions of masculinity; how the two nations' very different educational approaches have engendered and entrenched opposing habits of mind and expression; and how, ever since the eighteenth century, the sometimes sober, sometimes swaggering influence of the English aristocracy's sport and country clothing (and of English male tailoring techniques) have enlivened French high fashion, giving it a bounciness that militates against its tendency toward overrefinement.

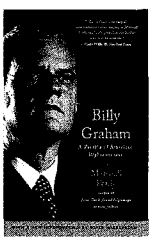
The authors periodically interrupt their adroit synthesis of narrative and analysis to conduct sharp debates with each other, an exercise that shows just how many of the great historical questions—the aims and motivations behind British colonial and commercial expansion, the nature and legacy of the French Revolution, the degree to which French security and German ambitions could have been reconciled after World War I—have yet to be settled. On one important matter, they rightly unite to insist that readers grasp a truth that's nearly universally acknowledged among scholars but that the popular and journalistic mind appears incapable of absorbing (thanks largely to the lingering, and for a long time pernicious, influence of John Maynard Keynes's *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, a book they denounce as a "travesty of the truth"): The Treaty of Versailles, though enormously flawed, was hardly a Carthaginian peace, and it didn't hobble Germany either economically or geopolitically. With so long and complex a work, one inevitably quibbles: The authors really should have devoted more attention to the French-inspired Salonika campaign in the First World War—a source of continual Anglo-French tension and a significant distraction (as the Brits saw it) from the main theater of operations—which illuminates the impact of France's deep domestic political divisions on relations between the allies and on their conduct of the war. Still, however, this is one of the most engaging and invigorating works of international history I've read in years.



BILLY GRAHAM at his historic 1949 revival in Los Angeles

LOOMIS DEAN/TIME LIFE PICTURES/GETTY IMAGES

An overly expansive southerner who flowered in the age of the often overly expansive New Journalism, Marshall Frady chose as subjects for his most ambitious, unrestrained, and ragged books three oversized fellow southerners: George Wallace, Jesse Jackson, and Billy Graham. His 1979 Graham biography, based mainly on his exhaustive interviews with and reporting on the reverend and his circle, has long been out of print, and was somewhat eclipsed by William Martin's subsequent, heavily documented, and more considered *A Prophet With Honor: The Billy Graham Story*, and by Graham's detailed, guileless, thoroughly unrevealing 1997 autobiography, *Just As I Am*. But this baggy book, just reissued, remains the most vivid portrait. In it, Frady, who died in 2004, presented Graham—who's preached, it would seem, to more people than any Christian figure in history—as both a simplistic man of earnest goodwill and a sincere believer, and as perhaps the greatest salesman of the twentieth century.



BILLY GRAHAM
by Marshall Frady
Simon and Schuster

Benjamin Schwarz is *The Atlantic*'s literary editor and national editor.

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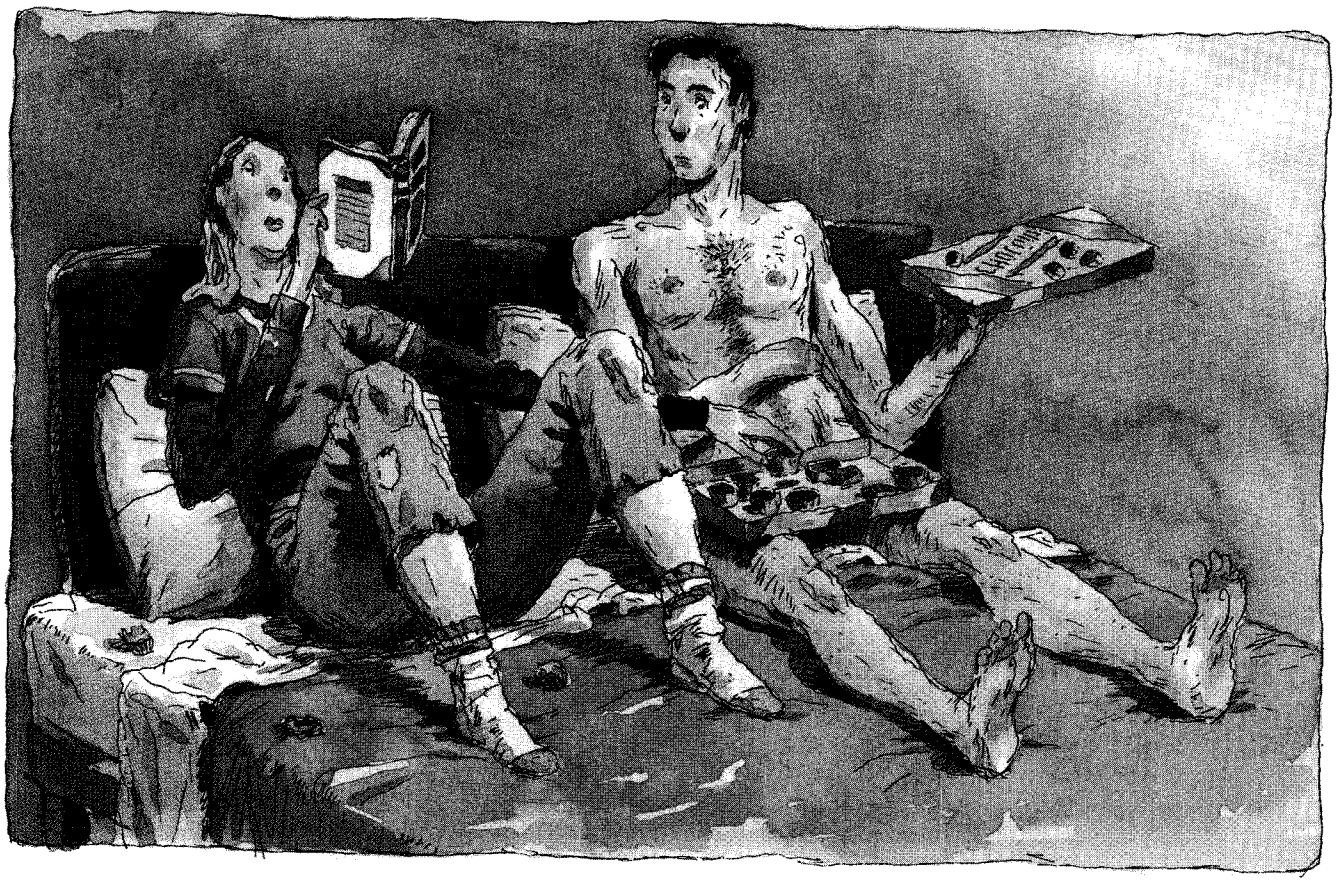

JOHN CUNEO

BOOKS

Women prefer food to sex with their husbands—and that's OK.

She's Just Not That Into You

BY SANDRA TSING LOH

Here's the next wild turn in the female sexual revolution. Goodness! we hear you wondering, half in excitement, half in alarm. Is it some hot new wave of Seattle girl-on-girl action? (Or is that "grrrl-on-grrrl"? Indeed, do we even have grrrls anymore—are they still in bisexual vogue, with their tattoos, piercings, perky magenta pigtails, and combat boots?) Or is the latest sex trend something America's desperate housewives are doing? One pictures sleek gated communities in Scottsdale, Arizona, where randy Hot Moms—possibly the bored, blonde, ex-model wives of millionaire athletes—are defiantly throwing Chardonnay-soaked house parties involving dildos *and* Botox, where Botox is actually shot, into the forehead, *from* a dildo. Or can it be ... octogenarian pole dancing? Or perhaps it's a crunchy-granola California womyn's thing involving shaving, much gentle shaving—shaving circles, in fact, that are starting in Esalen, during luxurious weekend retreats led by Gail Sheehy, who, unlike Nora Ephron, does *not* feel bad about her neck but at sixtysomething feels rather more like a delicious peach, laughingly sensual, newly juicy. Never mind the lubrication issues, the vaginal dryness *some* may experience: There are Vitamin E creams and aloe vera unguents for that. In fact, today's young men report how surprised they are by how much they *prefer* older women. The sheer brazen confidence is refreshing; the blithe sensuality, the lack of inhibition, except about the neck, but that's why there are turtlenecks. Turtlenecks and no pants—that's the ticket! And lots of Pilates ... nude, nude Pilates.

But no. All of these possibilities will pale compared with the corporeal

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I'D RATHER EAT CHOCOLATE: Learning to Love My Low Libido
by Joan Sewell
Broadway

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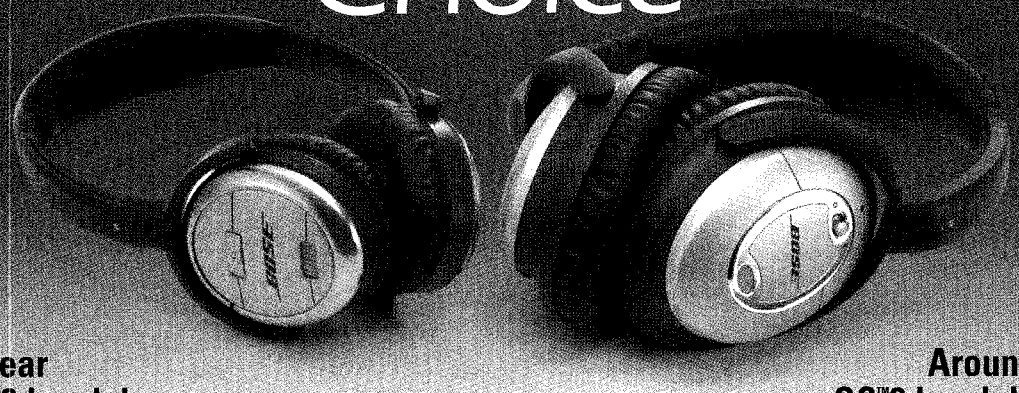

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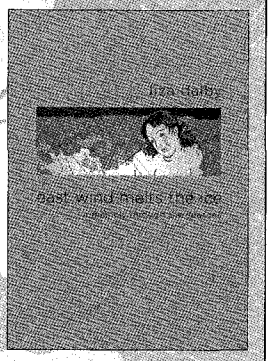

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depravity I'm about to describe—a radical self-pleasuring act that may well represent the true frontier of female liberation. Which is to say I speak to you candidly now about some lesbians I know, two lesbians. They live in a suburb of Los Angeles. They're both a hair north of forty. One is a computer technician; the other, a hospital administrator. Physically, they are much as you might picture them. For the past twelve years, Teri and Pat have had a special Monday-night ritual. They order an extra-large cheese pizza (sixteen slices). While waiting—and I am not making this up—they settle in on the couch with large twin bags of Doritos. Each chip is dipped first in Philadelphia cream cheese and then in salsa. Cream cheese, salsa. Cream cheese, salsa. Cream cheese, salsa. The Doritos are finished to the last crumb, and then, upon arrival, the pizza as well. For Teri and Pat, this night of a million carbs is, by special agreement, guilt-free. Both feel that it is better than sex.

No one suggests that men take estrogen supplements to mellow out so they better complement the moods of women.

On the one hand, yes, Teri and Pat are poster children for what wags call "lesbian bed death." Naysayers will look for—and find—yet more evidence to damn this pair, maybe pointing to the fifty pounds Teri and Pat have each gained over a decade, or to Pat's extensive collection of Beanie Babies, or to Teri's five cats, all of whom are named after colorful jazz divas who also, coincidentally, happen to be big fatties. On the other hand, Teri and Pat consider themselves happy. They are cheerful and generous with friends and with one another. In twelve years, neither has ever expressed an urge to stray. Or even to swing, to experiment outside the relationship with a new woman, a man, or even—more pertinently, on Monday nights—Chinese food. (Doesn't a trial foray into popcorn shrimp at least sound tempting?)

And in fact, evidence suggests that a growing number of women in America, if they looked into the deepest recesses of their souls, would admit to feeling that these two pushing-200-pound lesbians may be not so much pathetic as ... *damn lucky*. Because, to judge from the continual roiling crises on *Oprah* and *Dr. Phil*, American women are experiencing an epidemic, today, of *not wanting to have sex*. Or at least not wanting all the sex they "should" be having—i.e., once or twice or even three times a week, depending on which sexpert is confidently throwing out the vague approximations. It is a particularly vexing problem for heterosexual married females, who—now that we and our spouses are living so long, what with all the improved medical care—can expect to face another several decades of domestic union with a man. And clearly we can't just let the sex fall off like an unused appendage. Unlike Teri and Pat, we don't have the luxury, as we age, of letting our sex drives die a merciful death, or at least be ecstatically smothered (can't breathe! can't breathe! ooh, ooh! getting light-headed!) in Philly cream cheese.

Because first of all, men have needs, and if we don't service our sex-starved husbands, someone else will! Although I sometimes wonder if my own husband, after eighteen years of cohabitation, has grown, well, too lazy to have an affair. Like me, my soulmate has developed a certain endearing reluctance to change out of his sweatpants and leave the house after 5 p.m., and all of those kittenish young *Sex and the City* gals seem sharply demanding. They require meals eaten sitting up in restaurants, chilled crantinis, vigorous discoing. If my beloved husband were to embark on an affair with a twenty-six-year-old, I would be hurt, of course, but also impressed: all that showering, the micro-trimming, the

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grooming, the continual anointing, of all the body parts!

But this—the unhappy husband—this is but collateral damage for twenty-first-century women, because at its core, maintaining a vibrant sex life with one's man, woman, or even joy-giving appliance (and there's no shame in that) is, like anything, all about *us*. And in this marathon run across the veldt that is life, to be true to ourselves (whoever we are) and true to our sex (and our sexiness), we must fight—even at fifty—to keep at bay the woolly macramé projects, the cunningly knit pet sweaters, the comforting vats of vanilla pudding that increasingly beckon.

Or ... must we? In these, the sex-frequency wars, an authentically fresh new voice has arrived. Her name, Joan Sewell; her groundbreaking new sex book, *I'd Rather Eat Chocolate: Learning to Love My Low Libido*.

And just how low is her libido? Writes Sewell, throwing down the gauntlet:

> If I had a choice between reading a good book and having sex, the book wins. I notice I put in the adjective "good"—and that leaves me wondering if I'm not trying to put a better face on things.

We know what sort of woman you're envisioning—and you're wrong. Sewell is young, hip, slim, urban, and recently married to a man with the boy-band-cute name of Kip. Kip is smart, funny, sensitive, even hot. How hot? Let us look together at Kip's nude body. In fact, ladies, let's not rush. Let's take our own languorous, sweet time about it. Let's watch now as Sewell gives Kip a full-body massage, in preparation for some hot, hot sex:

> I took the scented oil from the dresser and put a good amount into my cupped hand. I let it warm there for a minute, making myself aware of its liquidity, then I massaged the hand-warmed oil ... against the rough hair of his chest ... I told him to turn over and oiled his back (so smooth!), and then his legs (swimmer's thighs!), and then I centered mischievously around his buttocks (naughty and luscious), and then

READING LIST

THE NEXT EXISTENTIAL QUESTION: What Font?

BY TERRY CASTLE

Caxton and Gutenberg are no doubt levitating in their crypts. With desktop publishing, personal Web pages, and hundreds of free digital fonts available on the Internet, writers of all sorts are discovering the arcane (and addictive) joys of typography. For procrastinating authors, font diddling turns out to be a delicious way to waste time. (Hmm ... what'll it be today? Palatino? Baskerville Semibold? Dampfplatz Solid with Zapfino caps, perhaps?) Herewith—for those still in the early, not-yet-home-wrecking stages of fontmania—

a few INSTRUCTIVE **and** *seductive* volumes.

Type & Typography, *by Phil Baines and Andrew Haslam* (2002). The ideal primer if you don't yet know your Bembo from your Frutiger. Deliquesce over serifs and sans, x-heights and bowls, and every kind of type from Grotesks to Fat Faces. I myself was a fat face in high school. Never had a date, so was forced to console myself with geeky Claude Garamond and his surprisingly large dingbat.

Creative Type: A Sourcebook of Classic and Contemporary Letterforms, *by Cees W. de Jong, Alston W. Purvis, and Friedrich Friedl* (2005). Fab fonts in historic layouts: a veritable *éducation sentimentale* for the would-be typophile. Like many recent books on typography, this one makes you feel cool and intellectual while you're paging through it. In reality, you're back in kindergarten, staring—slack-jawed—at a bunch of pretty A's, B's, and C's. Wipe that runny nose and see if you can spell *kerning*.

Indie Fonts, Vols. 1 and 2, *ed. by Richard Kegler, James Grieshaber, and Tamye Riggs* (2002, 2003). The once-fusty, Grolier Club world of type design has been revolutionized by the young, hip, and Mac-savvy. Creating fonts on a computer is now as fashion-forward as playing thrash guitar or sporting tattoo-covered calves. The *Indie Fonts* books document the digital "foundries" of the information age: punked-out guerrilla operations like Chank, fontBoy, Typodermic, GarageFonts, P22, Atomic Media. Very Burning Man—hairy, raw, and post-post.

Handwritten: Expressive Lettering in the Digital Age, *by Steven Heller and Mirko Ilić* (2004). The prolific Heller is a design-book god. Here, he and a colleague explore the nostalgic return of hand-lettering (or simulacra of same) in otherwise digitalized modern design. Yes, the scrawled, scratched, and splotchy text styles on display might be said to reinvent the wheel—like those digital "script" fonts one can buy online that mimic some anonymous clod's messy handwriting. But they fascinate all the same—as if two transsexuals, a male and a female, were to fall in love and try to have a baby.

Eric Gill: A Lover's Quest for Art and God, *by Fiona MacCarthy* (1989). Speaking of love, the bohemian and eccentric Eric Gill (1882–1940), charismatic founder of a Catholic Arts and Crafts commune and the greatest British type designer of the twentieth century, got plenty of it. When not carving letters or at his devotions, the randy inventor of Gill Sans and Perpetua entertained himself—sultan-like—by rogering his wife, sisters, daughters, disciples (male and female), and the long-suffering family dog. MacCarthy's classic biography is a treat. Who would have thought typography—not to mention religion—could be so stimulating?

Terry Castle is a professor of English at Stanford. Her books include *The Apparitional Lesbian* (1993) and *Courage, Mon Amie* (2002).

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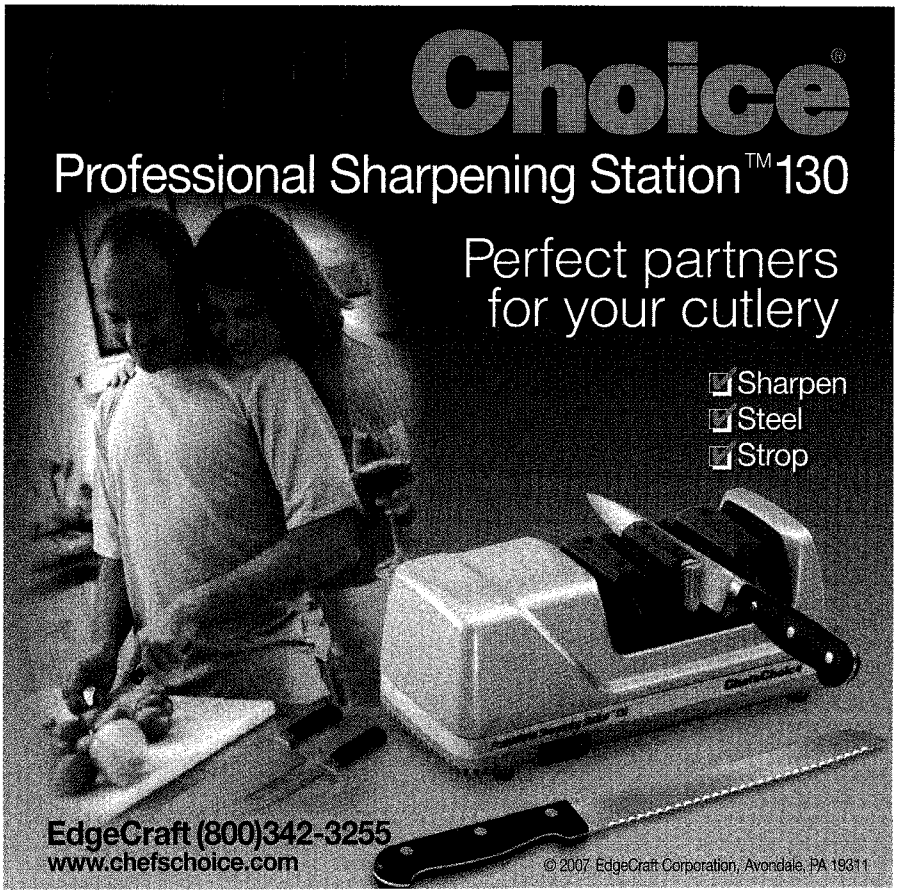

tantalizingly onto his testicles (aww, he trimmed the pubic hair on them—so considerate!). I focused on all his swoops and curves and the way my fingers played along them. Was any of this heightening my desire? Sure. I mean it had to be. I was definitely more sensually aware, more sensually aware of Kip's body. Okay, so it wasn't exactly making me hot. Was feeling sensual the same as sensual feeling? Let's not dwell.

Impossible to believe, but true. For this hip, young, urban woman, even rubbing massage oil into her husband's naughty and luscious buttocks ends up inducing not lust so much as a kind of low-level tedium. So it is with all the other popular "hot monogamy" techniques Sewell attempts—from talking dirty at a museum (which is so uncharacteristic that her husband is confused), to wearing thong underwear in public (cold, uncomfortable, and humiliating; younger women look and laugh), to smearing chocolate frosting on her husband's penis and then licking it off (resulting, to her horror, in the awful reveal: In the mirror, Sewell sees that her face has become a ghastly, chocolate-smeared reverse of Al Jolson's).

And understand that all the while, Mr. Naughty Luscious Buttocks is working as hard as he can to be the model postfeminist husband. His top half couldn't be more open and caring: He listens to all of his wife's stories, makes a point of buying her favorite ice cream, stands by so ready to deliver gentle back rubs (with oily hands) that she practically shrieks, turns tail, and runs away from him. There's literally nothing this Sensitive Man won't do to make his wife relaxed enough so that she might possibly, at some remote point, consider having sex with him. (Even still, Mr. NLB is lucky: Though sexpert John Gray, in *Mars and Venus in the Bedroom*, says that for a man to arouse his woman, he should be ready to "camp out" between her legs for approximately twenty minutes of cunnilingus, a creeped-out Sewell herself won't abide it.)

Figuring that there must be some deeper emotional trauma at play, Sewell and Kip seek a sex therapist, who probes

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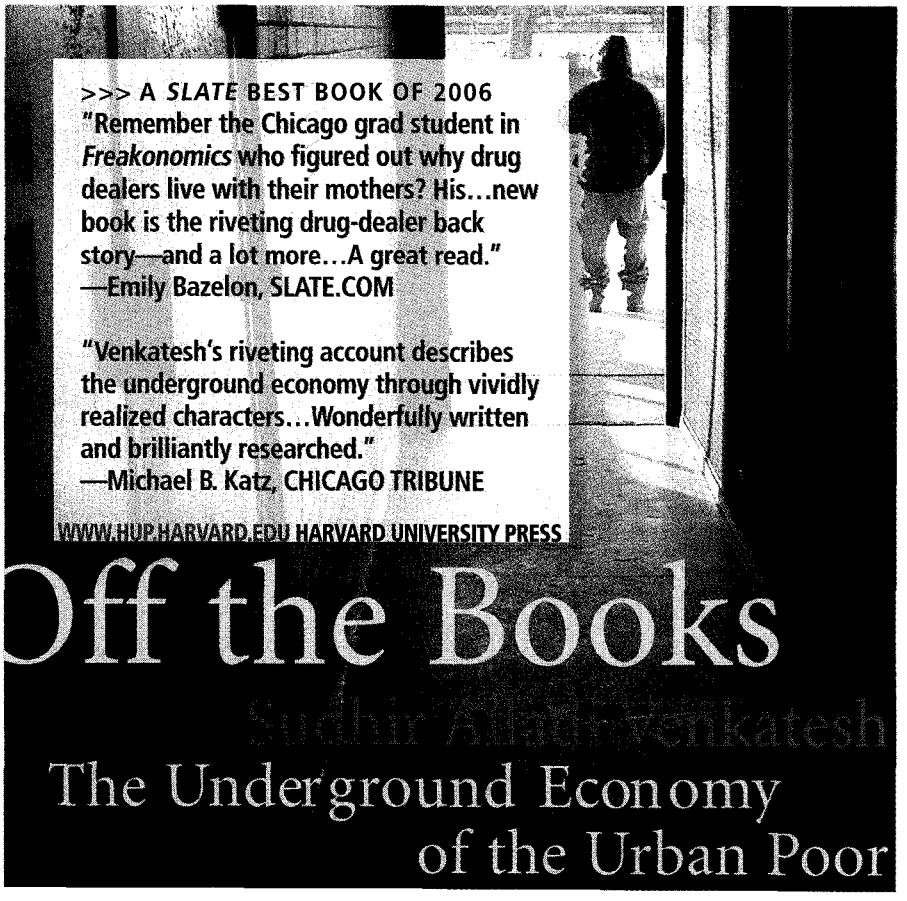
Sewell's sex history. (Or her *sexistory*. At a certain point, you want to start conflating every word with *sex*—e.g., what midlife marrieds have is *fortysex*; a particularly galling episode would be a *sextastrophe*. To that end, I think of a bookish fiftysomething bachelor friend of mine, who had suffered a four-year-long sexual dry spell. After much arduous typing on eHarmony, he finally met a similarly sex-starved female, and they broke the curse. How was the sex? He admitted: "Over the course of the evening, on a scale of 1 to 10, I'd say we hit every number.")

Anyway, surely, the therapist wonders, Sewell must have some prior upsetting incident? Past relationships must be to blame, including those Sewell had with her parents. And indeed, after digging, Sewell's therapist points to such sex-inhibiting factors as a distant father, teen feelings of ugliness, failure to trust, and thinking of sex as dirty.

Of course, as Sewell points out, Kip (who we know is also dutifully in therapy) has the exact same psychological markers in his background, and his libido is sky-high. Which brings us to the crux of Sewell's underlying political argument: Hormonally, it has long been understood that men and women are measurably different. Sewell was reminded of this obvious fact while watching a documentary about a sex-change procedure. With presumably no particular psychological agenda in mind, the doctors informed the female-to-male subject that

> she would have a higher sex drive when given that large an amount of testosterone. They simply took it *for granted* that there was a direct correlation between high testosterone levels and higher libido. They didn't have to know how Anita felt emotionally, or the status of her personal relationships, or her confidence levels, or trust issues to know that the amount of testosterone she received would increase her sex drive enormously.

But in this day and age, Sewell points out, to admit that a woman's sex drive tends to be lower than a man's seems politically incorrect.



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FICTION

BY MONA SIMPSON

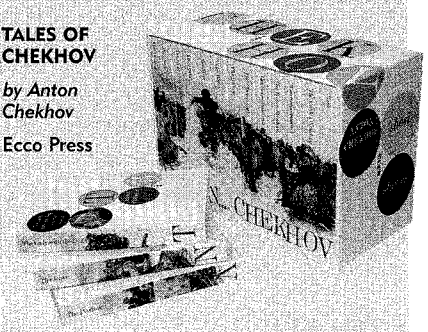
In 1984, Daniel Halpern, founder of the Ecco Press, began republishing all 201 of the Constance Garnett translations of Anton Chekhov's stories. Since then, the thirteen resulting volumes have become a contemporary staple for the library of any serious reader. (I think I've purchased five whole sets in those twenty-odd years—several as wedding presents, one as a baby present, one remains in my study.) The price of around $8.50 per volume (which would total $110 for the series) represented a tremendous bargain for the most comprehensive collection of Chekhov stories in what is still the best complete translation available in English. Late in 2006, to coincide with its own thirty-fifth anniversary, Ecco republished the thirteen volumes in a handsome boxed set. After twenty years, the price has climbed only to $150.

Chekhov is a master at making his characters' darkest aspects comprehensible and human. He's never sentimental and he's not particularly pleasant, but he will always feel modern because of his astonishing juxtapositions and the way his characters' swift, darting minds vacillate between idealism and boredom, vanity and hope. His narrator has a keen vision of class anger, resentment, and envy. Although less enchanted by his own characters than was Tolstoy, Chekhov acutely portrays largeheartedness.

Given that all of the Chekhov stories translated by Garnett can be downloaded for free (James Rusk made them available at chekhov2.tripod.com), Ecco might be wise to assemble the books in durable hardback; they will always find a market.

Mona Simpson is the author of four novels, including *Anywhere But Here* (1986) and *Off Keck Road* (2000).

TALES OF CHEKHOV
by Anton Chekhov
Ecco Press



Of course—and here's the paradox—this is not to say that Sewell finds masturbation either stressful or, in fact, a chore. Demurely shifting to the third person, she admits that "she herself has bowed her own violin, and darned if she can't get her own strings to sing like Pavarotti." It is true enough that women who feel tense about keeping up with their marital sex duties often find masturbation to be a stress-*buster*. Do it constantly, even daily? Why not? And what are we girls thinking about while we bow our own violin strings? Admits Sewell, "When I was an adolescent, I imagined these knights from the Middle Ages would ravish me." A recent confession that made me howl is in the anthology *Mortified*, where one of the contributors, Jillian Griffiths, describes her teen sexual fantasies about the members of Duran Duran—John puts on the *Rio* album and climbs on top of her "like a baby tiger. Gentle but sort of aggressive."

As one gets older, fantasy quality only worsens. An informal survey among women of a certain age who don't care anymore reveals the secret: Whatever is politically correct, you imagine its polar opposite, and that's what's hot. It's not fantasizing that you're Jodie Foster getting drooled over for your Oscar-winning acting—no. It's fantasizing that you're the victims Foster has played to get the Oscar, the waitress raped on a pinball machine by a bunch of mooks—yeah!

Or here's another: *You* are a nineteen-year-old blonde, a slightly chunky and bored communications major with a defiantly unquenchable taste for amaretto sours. *They* are a passel of fifty-something Kuwaiti businessmen (oil?) at some hideous downtown hotel with glass elevators. The oilmen offer money for a private party. Thirty dollars? No. Five hundred? Better. Two thousand seems about right. Five thousand is definitely too much (the high price being too call-girl-professional; proper licensing in the state of Nevada and vaginal health exams somehow become involved). At $5,000 the fantasy loses traction.

Regarding movie stars, again, political idealism, earnestness, and altruism have become drawbacks. I've never once had a fantasy involving Richard Gere and Tibet. Brad Pitt these days seems completely desexed, what with the close-cropped hair and the relentless pussy-whipping by Angelina Jolie. He is always trooping somewhere, saving Africa or something, hamstrung every which way by multiple BabyBjörns. Many women my age admit to feeling little for Ralph Fiennes now, or even back in *The English Patient*. Oh no. Only in *Schindler's List*—some thirty pounds heavier, the fleshy Nazi captain, harassing young Jewish women in his basement. Hot!

Sewell is partial to Mel Gibson in *Mad Max*. But forget Young Mel. How about Old Mel, anti-Semitically ranting by the side of the highway, mad-dog-drunk on tequila, his career in ruins? We are Cop Lady, and Gibson is taking us right there in the squad car, oddly gleeful, pretending to flay us as in *The Passion of the Christ*. "Sugar Tits! Go! Fetch my coffee!" Hot hot hot!

No wonder no one wants to talk much about real sex, dirty sex, hot sex—because the true nuts and bolts can't be made to suit any forward-looking social agenda. Maybe, in this sense, female sexuality really is a culturally subversive little beastie. Not only do many women enjoy it best alone, but of their fantasies, perhaps the less said the better (in terms of humanity's social progress). For women, though, the bizarre and the irregular might just *be* "normal." And if so, as Sewell suggests, widespread pressure—from both the left and the right—for women to have a "normal," at-least-two-times-a-week sex life may ultimately be geared to serve not women's natural tendencies but men's. Who sets the pace anyway? As Sewell notes, about the husband/wife divide:

> No one is trying to lower men's sex drives. I don't hear, "Doctor, my sex drive is *too high*. Please, do something about it. I feel guilty and ashamed that I don't want less sex. It's killing my marriage."

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No one suggests, continues Sewell, that men take estrogen supplements to mellow out so they better complement the moods of women. Although that could have measurable benefits. After all, elevated testosterone levels in males have been linked to such social ills as murder and rape. And I have to admit, the urge to slap my own husband and vomit in a ditch comes not from sex but from what I feel is his kamikaze driving. When he's at the wheel (i.e., always), I white-knuckle it, I close my eyes, I can barely restrain a scream. (Many wives feel this way. As a girlfriend said recently about her husband, "If any woman drove as ragefully as Ron, she'd be hospitalized!")

Nor is heightened female sexuality always about true spiritual liberation. The given orthodoxy, which I recall first learning in my early-1980s college years, was that for a woman, to appear "sex-positive" was to be labeled a whore—this was our repressive history. Socially she would be sidelined. But how the pendulum has swung. Consider the current proto-cultural-Hollywood-liberal-mediavor-blogosphere-feminist-ish woman of this year, and next, Arianna Huffington. A few months ago, I looked up at the *Colbert Report* episode my husband had on, and I let out a little yelp. There was Arianna, chatting articulately with Stephen about her latest publication, *On Becoming Fearless ... in Love, Work, and Life* (which, with all of its generous quotations, I found less a book than a literary breezeway; but no matter). "She really is fearless!" I exclaimed. Because—no Nancy Pelosi-pearls-and-jacket-wearer, she—there sat tousle-haired Huffington in a frilly, sleeveless, plunging-V-neck blouse, complete with visibly erect nipples. (I thought immediately of that *Sex and the City* episode in which Samantha shows her girlfriends handy nipple caps one can wear to render a similar effect.)

I want to give credit where credit is due. La Huff looks good. Every time you see her, she looks younger and hotter (like she's drinking the blood of Mary Matalin and James Carville, who seem to become more and more desiccated by the day). But do the erect nipples signal

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she's ready for sex? We remind you that, unlike the hapless Joan Sewell, who faces the daunting specter of her husband's naughty luscious buttocks every night, Huffington is glamorously single, has a busy media schedule, and in a former life was actually married *to a gay man.* So what Huffington's *Colbert Report* twinlets are saying is less "Come and do me!" than "I am very, very excited ... about selling books!"

And so it is, for a certain influential ilk of modern, high-achieving women, particularly those in the camera's eye. The ability to signal sexual readiness—regardless of whether you actually put out for some poor chap waiting at home—is not disempowering but empowering. As is being thin. As is the latest hoop to jump through for women over forty: having impossibly-toned-for-your-age upper arms. (I think of the cover of author/law professor Susan Estrich's recent political book, *Soulless.* A bite back at Ann Coulter's *Godless*, it shows Estrich with long blond hair and wearing a tight black tank top, in Coulter's same provocative stance. At my local public-radio station, we women crowded around the book. Not only were Estrich's breasts perky, but—as one fiftysomething editor breathed in awe—"Look at her arms!") Then again, I suppose you can't totally blame our media for favoring catlike, frisky women. Four hundred pounds of lesbian bed death may be yet another all-too-common human reality that's just not ready for prime time.

You know? If it were really about sensual female pleasure, everyone would stop waving the dildos already and let us eat. Sewell herself would "rather eat chocolate." But even here a Puritan ethic crashes the would-be sybaritic fun. Yes, by all means, eat chocolate—not more than half an ounce, or approximately three-quarters of a teaspoon if you do not own a food scale, per week. And dark chocolate only—it wards off hypertension, is full of antioxidants. As for sex, just think of it as another cardiovascular workout, a self-improvement regimen not unlike aerobics ("sweating to the oldies," we call it, at my age). That's right. Sex—your sexologist/cardiologist commands it. Two to three times a week. Hop on that sex treadmill. Get your heart rate up, to at least 160 beats per minute. And drink plenty of water (avoid alcohol at all costs). It's good for ya!

Look, you don't have to camp out between a woman's legs for twenty minutes of cunnilingus to know that sex—like life itself—involves a fair amount of tedium. With sudden shooting moments of pleasure. Because Sewell loves her husband and knows that he, like her, craves physical contact (never mind that for her it's cuddling and for him it involves his penis), they eventually work out a contract both can live with. It involves hand jobs, lube jobs, and—when she doesn't feel like being touched—her dressing up like a Playmate and letting him watch ... so he can finish himself off by himself. For a woman who doesn't crave sex, our brave protagonist has, by the end, actually had a fair amount of action—with her husband, no less—and one can't help but applaud the warty and ungainly thing long-term love really is. (For more on the intricacies of nuptial whoopee, see Cristina Nehring's "Of Sex and Marriage," in the December 2006 *Atlantic*, and Caitlin Flanagan's "The Wifely Duty," in the January/February 2003 *Atlantic.*)

Even with all the massage oil and E-Zone handbooks in the world, sex is much too mysteriously volatile an activity for even loving men and women to have to have together, all the time. Or perhaps they can have it, at the same time, but in different rooms. *Vive la différence!* Rather than trying to rate oneself on one's ability to hit regular marks on an abstract calendar, members of both sexes could well find this to be true liberation. So what if our peak sexpisodes (again, like life) are nasty, brutish, and short? For many—may God and John Gray forgive us—that's just the way we like it.

Sandra Tsing Loh is a writer and performer whose radio commentaries appear regularly on American Public Media's *Marketplace.* She can also be heard on KPCC-FM, in Pasadena, California.

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BOOKS

A new history of Orientalism reveals the vagary and variety of the field—and the danger of declaring any area of inquiry off-limits.

East Is East

BY CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

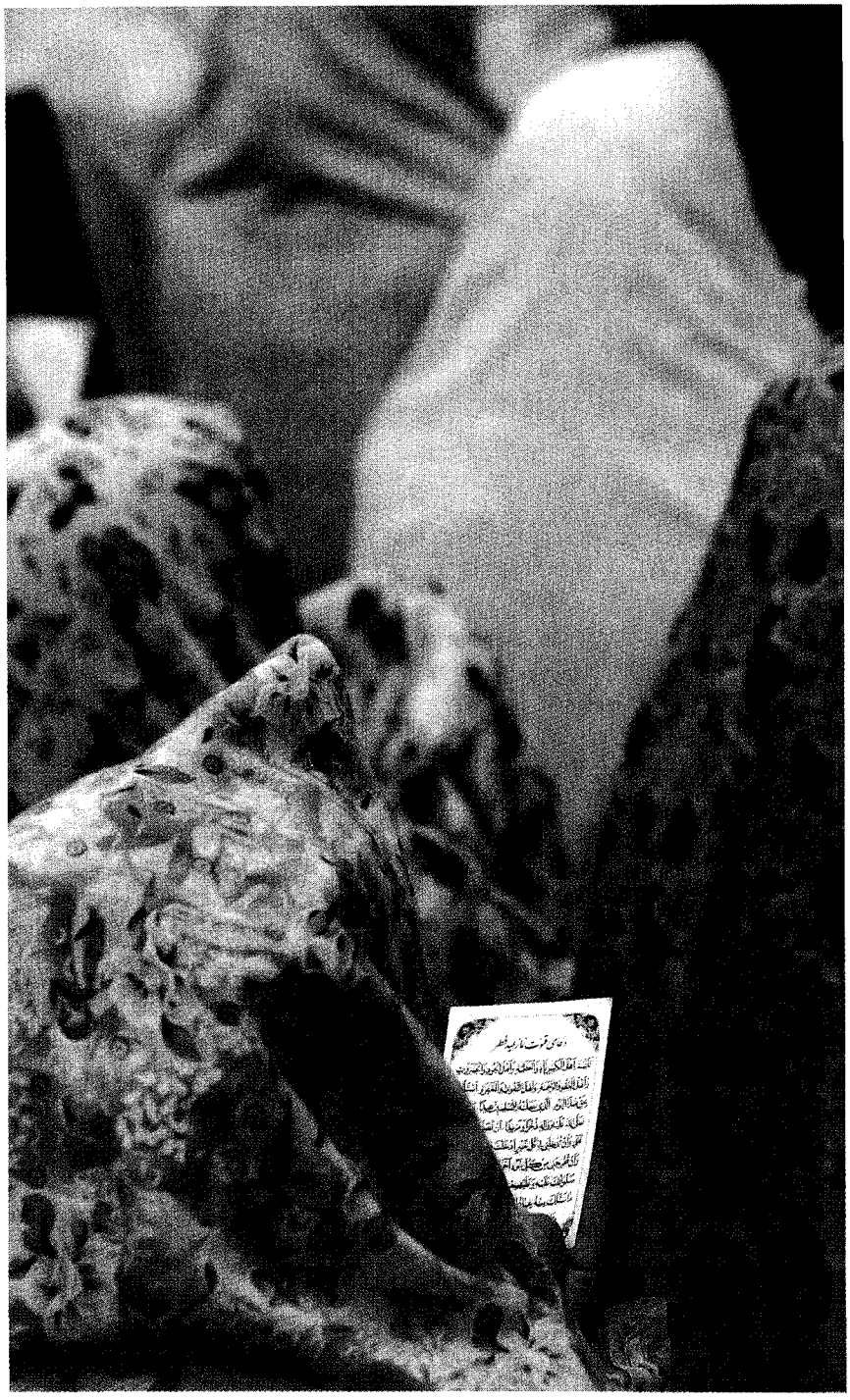
Of what book and author was the following sentence written, and by whom?

> Rarely has an Oriental servant of a white-identified, imperial design managed to pack so many services to imperial hubris abroad and racist elitism at home—all in one act.

This was the quasi-articulate attack recently leveled, by a professor of comparative literature at Columbia University, on *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, Azar Nafisi's account of private seminars on Nabokov for young women in Iran. The professor described Nafisi's work as resembling "the most pestiferous colonial projects of the British in India," and its author as the moral equivalent of a sadistic torturer at Abu Ghraib. "To me there is no difference between Lynndie England and Azar Nafisi," Hamid Dabashi, who is himself of Iranian origin and believes that Nafisi's book is a conscious part of the softening-up for an American bombing campaign in Iran, has said.

I cannot imagine my late friend Edward Said, who was a professor of English and comparative literature at Columbia, either saying or believing anything so vulgar. And I know from experience that he was often dismayed by the views of people claiming to be his acolytes. But if there is a faction in the academy that now regards the acquisition of knowledge about "the East" as an essentially imperialist project, amounting to an "appropriation" and "subordination" of another culture, then it must be conceded that Said's 1978 book, *Orientalism*, was highly influential in forming this cast of mind.

Robert Irwin's new history of the field of Oriental studies is explicitly designed as a refutation of Said's thesis, and has



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an entire chapter devoted to a direct assault upon it. The author insists that he has no animus against Said personally or politically, that he tends to share his view of the injustice done to the people of Palestine, and that he regarded him as a man of taste and discernment. Irwin makes this disclaimer, perhaps, very slightly too fulsomely—at one point also recycling the discredited allegation that Said was not "really" a Palestinian from Jerusalem at all. But he is more lucid and reliable when he sets out to demonstrate the complexity and diversity of Orientalism, to defend his profession from the charge of being a conscious or unconscious accomplice of empire, and to decry the damage done by those whose reading even of *Orientalism* was probably superficial.

DANGEROUS KNOWLEDGE
Orientalism and Its Discontents
by Robert Irwin
Overlook Press

I still think that Said's book was useful if only in forcing people in "the West" to examine the assumptions that underlay their cosmology. If asked what I mean by that, I should cite Robert Hughes, who recalls how his parents' generation in Australia would refer to New Guinea or Indonesia, say, as "the Far East" when they were, in point of fact, their near North. The very term *Middle East*, I have recently learned from Michael Oren's absorbing history of American engagement in the region, was coined by Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan, whose life's work was the creation of an American Navy on the model of the British imperial fleet. I remember my own surprise when I realized, in New Delhi in the 1970s, that by the crisis in "Western Asia," the newspaper article I was reading meant to refer to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. It can be said for Edward Said that he helped make us reconsider our perspectives a little.

"This book," writes Irwin in his agreeably breezy introduction to it, "contains many sketches of individual Orientalists—dabblers, obsessives, evangelists, freethinkers, madmen, charlatans, pedants, romantics. (Even so, perhaps still not enough of them.)" Indeed, its chief strength lies precisely in showing the vagary and variety of the subject, and thus obliquely convicting any single unified critique of it as essentially reductionist—a neat tu quoque against the Said school.

Among Irwin's initial points is one that should scarcely have needed to be made. The British proconsular class were for the most part not Orientalists at all. They were classicists. When they adapted old texts and languages to their task of dominion, they were looking to the grand precedents of Greece and Rome. And though it is true that the protracted Greek confrontation with the Persians created the first "East-West" division in the European mind, it is also true that the Greek word *barbaros*, with all its freight of later associations, was not a pejorative. It simply demarcated Greek-speaking from non-Greek-speaking peoples. So it was simplistic of Said to say that the roots of the problem lay with *The Iliad*: The Hellenes often looked down on uncouth northerners like the Scythians, while greatly admiring (and borrowing from) the Egyptians. As Irwin goes on to say:

> Lord Curzon, Sir Ronald Storrs, T. E. Lawrence and most of the rest of them were steeped in the Greek and Roman classics. Readings of Thucydides, Herodotus and Tacitus guided those who governed the British. Lord Cromer, the proconsul in Egypt, was obsessed with the Roman empire and its decline and fall. Sir Ronald Storrs used to read the *Odyssey* before breakfast. T. E. Lawrence read the Greek poets during his time as an archaeologist at Carcemish and later translated the *Odyssey*. Colonial administrators were much more likely to be familiar with the campaigns of Caesar than those of Muhammad and the Quraysh.

In contradistinction, or at any rate by contrast, those whose passion was for the Orient were very often numbered among the *anti*-imperialists. This was true not only of English scholars like Edward Granville Browne—author of *A Year Among the Persians*, who became a strenuous partisan of the struggle of Eastern peoples against British and Russian tutelage—but also of many of the French enthusiasts, from the wildly eccentric Louis Massignon, who campaigned for the independence of French North Africa and took his anti-Zionism to the point of Judeophobia, to Marxisant professors like Maxime Rodinson. Nor was it at all uncommon for Orientalist pioneers to "go native," if the expression can be allowed, and to adopt forms of Islam such as Sufism. This was not true of the Soviet and Nazi Orientalists, on whom Irwin gives us two tantalizingly brief sections; but the first group was concerned with negating and discrediting Islam, and the second was obsessed with bogus racist and pseudo-ethnological theories, which in their turn caused many of the finest German scholars to flee overseas and replant the discipline elsewhere. None of this makes a good "fit" with Said's over- and underdrawn picture of a discipline dedicated to the propagation of British and French imperial hegemony.

Though this book is an extraordinarily attractive short introduction to the different national schools of Orientalism, and to the various scholars who labored to make Eastern philology and philosophy more accessible, its chief interest to the lay reader lies in its consideration of Orientalism as a study of Islam. Irwin shows us the early Christian attempts to translate and understand the Koran, most of which were preoccupied with showing its heretical character. These make especially absorbing reading in the light of the pope's recent lecture at Regensburg University, and his revival of the medieval critique of the teachings of Muhammad. That tradition extends quite far into the modern epoch, with the consecrated work of Father Henri Lammens, a Belgian Jesuit who taught in Beirut in the early part of the twentieth century and made himself master of the suras and hadiths. Lammens's intention was to show that, to the extent that Muhammad could be said to have existed, the prophet was a sex-crazed brigand whose preachments were either plagiarized or falsified. The greatest Orientalist

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of them all, the Hungarian genius Ignaz Goldziher, asked ironically, "What would remain of the Gospels if [Lammens] applied to them the same methods he applies to the Qur'an?"

The same unwelcome implication of this excellent question may well have occurred to the Church itself: I can tell you that Lammens's books are now extremely hard to obtain. And though Irwin does not say so explicitly, the general academic reticence about Islam that he so much deplores may well have something to do with the potentially atheistic consequences of any unfettered inquiry. As he phrases it:

> Because of the possible offense to Muslim susceptibilities, Western scholars who specialize in the early history of Islam have to be extremely careful what they say, and some of them have developed subtle forms of double-speak when discussing contentious matters.

This is to say the very least: "Western scholars" and authors like Karen Armstrong and Bruce Lawrence have adopted the strategy of taking Islam's claims more or less at face value, while non-Western critics who do not believe in revealed religion at all, such as Ibn Warraq, are now operating on the very margin of what is considered tactful or permissible. Even a relatively generous treatment of the life of the Prophet Muhammad, such as that composed by Rodinson, is considered too controversial on many campuses in the West, and as involving readers or distributors in real physical danger if offered for discussion even in Cairo, let alone Baghdad or Beirut. The splendid nineteenth-century Oxford Orientalist David Margoliouth (described by Irwin as having "the kind of beautiful mind that could see patterns where none existed") was perhaps not so eccentric when he claimed to notice analogies "between the founder of Islam and Brigham Young, the founder of the Mormon faith." The usefulness of polygamy in forming and cementing alliances, as well as in satisfying other requirements, is something that was indeed noticed by Joseph Smith—the actual "founder of the Mormon faith"—who furthermore announced himself as the man who would do for North America what Muhammad had done for the Arabian Peninsula. Irwin might have done well to pursue this and other insights, rather than exhibiting a little of the very reluctance of which he claims to disapprove.

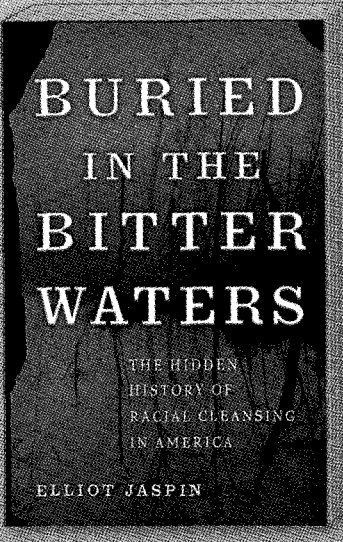
To return, then, to Said. It is, on reflection, a great mark against his book that it did not consider the work of Goldziher, whose preeminence Irwin has reasserted in a wonderfully readable thumbnail chapter that leaves one yearning for more. Even Said's friend Albert Hourani, who did so much to arouse interest in the neglected field of Arabic and Middle Eastern studies, could not pardon this omission. And Rodinson, that great Jewish foe of Zionism, felt constrained to remind his Palestinian comrade that it is a mistake to concentrate exclusively on the Arab world, since four-fifths of Muslims are not Arabs. Most of all, though, one must be ready to oppose any analysis that even slightly licenses the idea that "outsiders" are not welcome to study other cultures. So far from defending those cultures from depredation, such a stance actually permits them to fall under the dominance of stultified and conservative forces to whom everything depends on an affirmation of blind faith. This, and not the inquiry into its origins, might be described as the problem in the first place.

The idea that "outsiders" may not study other cultures only empowers those to whom everything depends on blind faith.

Christopher Hitchens is an *Atlantic* contributing editor and a *Vanity Fair* columnist.

The Shocking History of ETHNIC CLEANSING in America

Based on original interviews and nearly a decade of painstaking research in archives and census records, *Buried in the Bitter Waters* provides irrefutable evidence that racial cleansing occurred again and again on American soil and fundamentally reshaped the geography of race.



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BOOKS

A guide to additional releases

COVER to COVER

HISTORY

Murder City
by Michael Lesy (Norton)
The author of *Wisconsin Death Trip*—an American Gothic classic documenting creepy fin-de-siécle goings-on in a small midwestern town—turns to the Chicago clip morgue, reconstructing a series of particularly sordid Windy City murders from their descriptions in 1920s newspapers. The accompanying photos of formally attired but apparently savage Jazz Age Chicagoans are as chilling as the deadpan tones in which Lesy renders their tales, lending his book the archaic strangeness of myth.

The California Gold Rush and the Coming of the Civil War
by Leonard L. Richards (Knopf)
An engrossing chronicle of the political intrigues that engulfed California in the 1850s, when pro-Southern legislators there angled to turn the state's newfound wealth to the benefit of the slave economy.

Shameful Flight
by Stanley Wolpert (Oxford)
Even the most die-hard defender of British rule of the subcontinent can't claim that the imperial power's final act was its finest hour. Churchill called it "shameful flight," and this disturbing book makes clear just what a hash Britons made of quitting India and of their concomitant partition of Punjab and Bengal, which resulted in the mutual slaughter of at least a million Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus. While rightly assigning most of the blame to the last viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, Wolpert identifies many culprits before him, in Whitehall and the Raj, who contributed to the disaster.

Three New Deals
by Wolfgang Schivelbusch (Metropolitan)
A German scholar draws dispassionate parallels between Nazism, Italian Fascism, and New Deal liberalism in tracking varied responses to the social and economic trials of the 1930s. Schivelbusch is scrupulous about comparing without equating, and he has an interesting answer to the question of why, faced with similar hardships and possessed of an apparently similar hunger for public-works projects and demagoguery, the United States did not join Italy and Germany in succumbing to the fascist temptation: Since a creed of classlessness—a necessary precondition for fascism—had long been a cornerstone of American identity, the U.S. was inoculated against the larger threat.

BIOGRAPHY

The Gentle Subversive
by Mark Hamilton Lytle (Oxford)
A brief biography by an environmental historian, focusing on Rachel Carson's development as a writer and the many battles she fought (against breast cancer and a skeptical scientific establishment) to see *Silent Spring* into print. In defending Carson against critics past and present, Lytle demonstrates the quiet radicalism of her work.

Mae West: "It Ain't No Sin"
by Simon Louvish (St. Martin's)
Onscreen, Mae West was the ultimate sex goddess, all slink, allure, and come-hither. Offscreen, she was a tough, smart old bird who worked her whole life to create and preserve that sexy image. Louvish's painstakingly researched and shrewd biography tells all about Mae—body, libido, and, perhaps most surprisingly and fascinatingly, mind.

Phiz
by Valerie Browne Lester (Pimlico)
A sparkling portrait of Charles Dickens's longtime illustrator, Hablot Knight "Phiz" Browne, whose creations are nearly as responsible as his collaborator's for our enduring impressions of Victorian life.

William Empson: Against the Christians
by John Haffenden (Oxford)
The first installment of this monumental work has been hailed as one of the best literary biographies ever written in English. This second volume, at once exhaustive and exquisite, picks up where its predecessor left off, tracking the eccentric and heretical critic and poet from his stint as a BBC propagandist during World War II through the publication of *Milton's God* (his most controversial work) and up to his death.

SOCIETY *and* CULTURE

Stacked
by Susan Seligson (Bloomsbury)
An amply endowed journalist explores society's complicated relationship with the female breast. Bearing a suitably overstuffed quiver of mammary synonyms (Seligson deserves some sort of lifetime-achievement award for elegant variation), her book is an entertaining, if not especially groundbreaking, tour of plastic-surgery clinics, exotic-dancing trade shows, and the national bedroom. It also offers some interesting factoids along the way: Seventy percent of women wear the wrong bra size, for example, and *topfree*—rather than *topless*—is the preferred term among advocates for women's right to appear bare-breasted in public.

Unhooked
by Laura Sessions Stepp (Riverhead)
A *Washington Post* reporter follows three groups of high-school and college girls through the wilds of "hooking up"; the by-now-familiar term, with its ambiguous mechanical overtones, neatly encapsulates the current young-adult sexual landscape. Stepp's account of her subjects' repeated disappointments is numbing and sad; her wide-ranging

PETER HOEY

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list of contributing factors—text messaging, prolonged adolescence, Title IX, the complex legacy of feminism, colleges' increasing reluctance to act in loco parentis, etc.—is on-target and thought-provoking; and her proposed solutions—valuing oneself, seeking romance, privileging the erotic over the pornographic—are basically sensible.

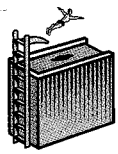
***Oklahoma!*:**
The Making of an American Musical
by Tim Carter (Yale)
With due respect to the genius of Lorenz Hart's lyrics, something enormous happened to Richard Rodgers—and to American musical theater—when he teamed up with Oscar Hammerstein to produce the first of their many shows. Carter, a professor of music, conducts a detailed examination of *Oklahoma*'s origins; he separates myth from fact and convincingly establishes the play's artistic and historical importance.

Bambi vs. Godzilla
by David Mamet (Pantheon)
The famed director and screenwriter puts forth a self-consciously searing account of Hollywood's current decadent horrors. Mamet offers the occasional winning aside: Preston Sturges's work is "irrefutable proof of an afterlife, for it is impossible to make films that sweet and not go to heaven." But many of his observations manage to be simultaneously banal and obscure: "Storytelling is like sex. We all do it naturally. Some of us are better at it than others." If this counts as heresy, then the movie business may be just as shallow and insular as advertised.

Made for Each Other
by Bronwyn Cosgrave (Bloomsbury)
A former editor at British *Vogue* exhaustively reviews the fashions worn by nominated actresses at the first seventy-three Academy Awards presentations. Cosgrave's book is thoroughly illustrated and appealingly knowing, and it leaves no doubt that the annual spectacle is as painstakingly stage-managed as it seems to be.

Beyond 9 to 5
by Sarah Norgate (Columbia)
A British psychologist takes a comparative look at people's experiences of time throughout history and around the world. Norgate's conclusions about time are largely familiar (there never seems to be enough of it), and her book is meandering and unfocused, although it does give readers an opportunity to learn why it's difficult to retain memories from before the age of three, why 11 percent of Canadians are awake at 3 a.m., and why the migration of more and more workers onto the graveyard shift may portend significant biological and political challenges.

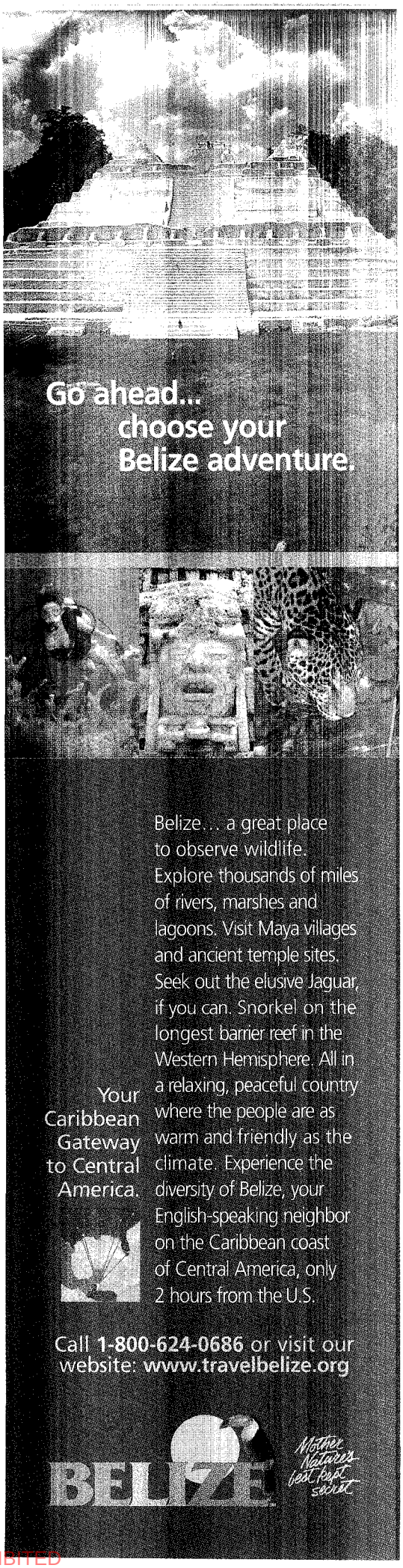
FICTION *and* LITERATURE



The Other Side of You
by Salley Vickers (FSG)
Vickers's training as a psychologist mostly serves her well as a novelist: She can decipher her characters' internal motivations with intense clarity and she has a high tolerance for contradictory emotions and unreasonable, though believable, behavior. In previous books, passages in which she wears her therapist hat can be jarring, but in this tightly structured novel about how self-doubt frustrates happiness, she turns that tendency to her advantage by making her protagonist a psychiatrist and analyst. As in her best-selling debut, *Miss Garnet's Angel*, here she uses art—in this case Caravaggio's paintings—to intensify and elevate her themes.

Ten Days in the Hills
by Jane Smiley (Knopf)
Contemporary Hollywood in the hands of Jane Smiley: What could be more promising? Yet this richly cast novel—in which a director, his how-to-book-writer lover, and various satellite figures hang around a mansion overlooking the Getty and talk, talk, talk—suffers from its form. The trouble is that the talk—bemoaning the war in Iraq, for instance, and reviewing the plots of fictitious movies and the events of past lives—is not nearly as fascinating as the characters, and obviously Smiley, think it is.

The Notebooks of Robert Frost
edited by Robert Faggen (Harvard)
A reprinting of Frost's extant notebooks, spanning more than sixty years, this volume offers the voyeuristic thrill of peering into a master craftsman's workshop to glimpse the discarded drafts, private musings, and scattered fragments that can in time become art.



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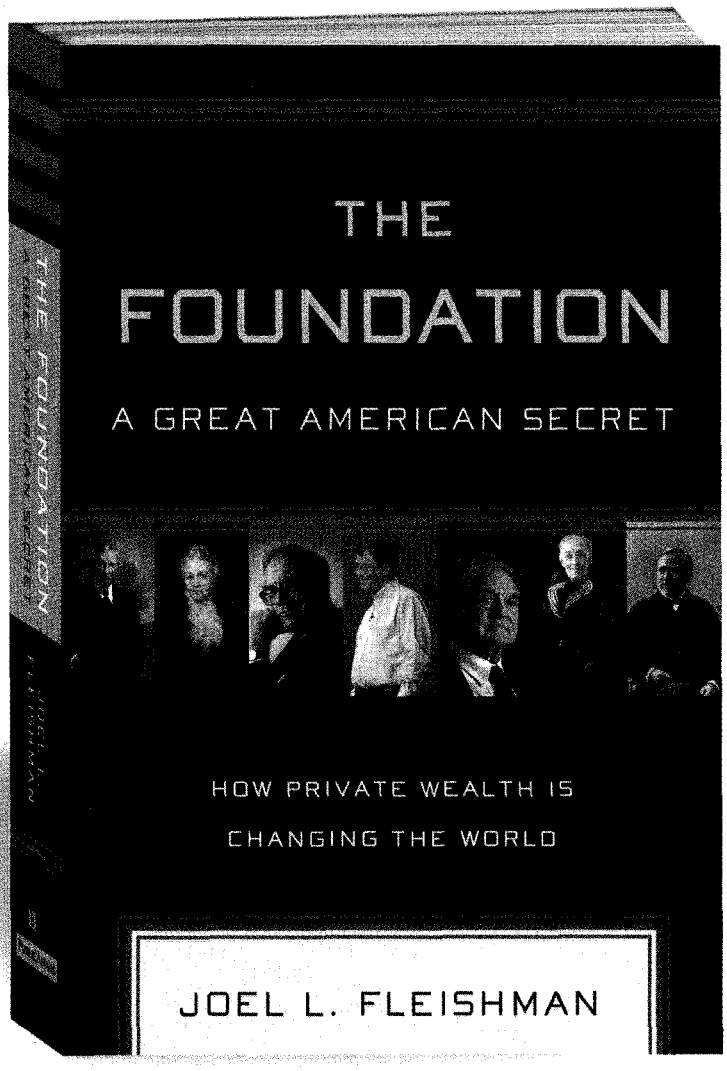
The thirty-five billion dollar per year question:

What do America's foundations do with your money?



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TRAVELS

A visit to the home of the famed Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus

The Constant Gardener

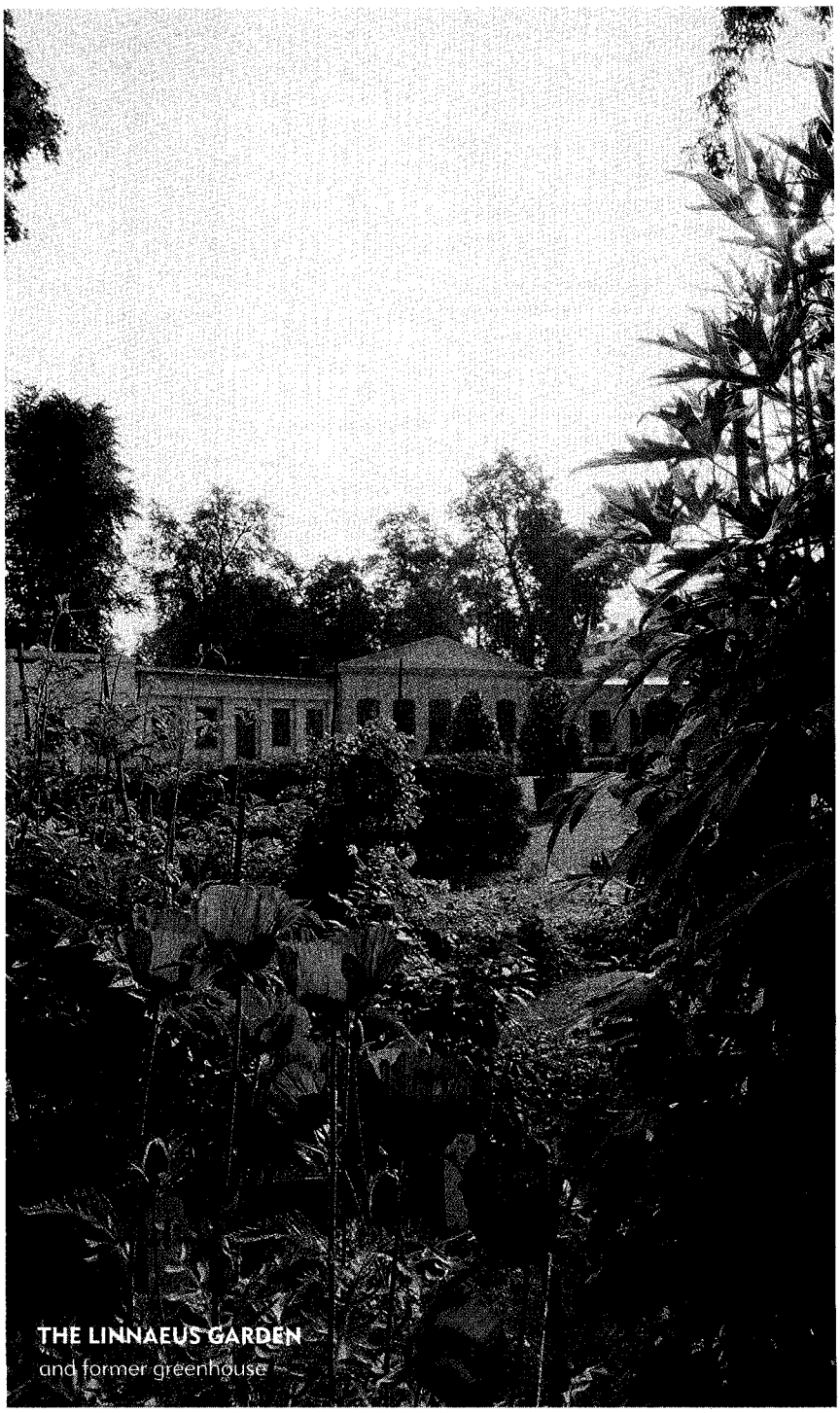
BY EMILY HIESTAND

Last spring I traveled with my husband, Peter, to Uppsala, an ancient city northwest of Stockholm on the gulf of Ekoln, one of the vast, inland-reaching bays of Sweden's Lake Mälaren. Known for its venerable university, for exuberant bonfires on Walpurgis Eve, and for small-town charm, Uppsala is also the city of Carolus Linnaeus, Sweden's most famous scientist, whose tercentennial birthday is celebrated this year.

We had discovered Uppsala on an earlier visit to Sweden, one stormy summer afternoon when the Baltic archipelago did not beckon. Traveling inland that day instead, we had only a glimpse of the city, enough to know we should return to explore it and its trove of scientific and botanical gems, including—a real surprise at the cool latitude of 60 degrees N—one of the world's most significant gardens.

Settled so early it is mentioned in Norse mythology, the Uppsala region is a silvery Nordic landscape of dark-green firs, white birches, and pale-gold fields dotted with manor houses and barns. It was long the seat of the pagan Svea kings, whose deities were Thor, Freyr, and Odin, and whose burial mounds still rise in Gamla ("Old") Uppsala. The city today stretches out along the flatlands by the Fyris River, then ripples up a glacial ridge, culminating in a massive sixteenth-century castle painted the color of a poached salmon—a bit of legerdemain by pigment that leavens the bulky fortress considerably. Uppsala moves at a slower pace than Stockholm and is perfectly scaled for walking; we easily strolled from the train station to our hotel,

MORE ON THEATLANTIC.COM
For an author-narrated slideshow of Stockholm, Uppsala, and the Baltic archipelago, visit www.theatlantic.com/sweden



THE LINNAEUS GARDEN and former greenhouse

ANDERS DAMBERG/UPPSALA TOURISM

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THE TRAVEL ADVISORY

Where to Stay

Classic Nordic style, a sauna, and a bounteous breakfast buffet make the **Scandic Uplandia** (Dragarbrunnsgatan 32; 011-46-18-495-2600) an excellent choice. Two other distinguished hotels are **Grand Hotell Hörnan** (Bangårdsgatan 1; 011-46-1813-9380), by the river, and **First Hotel Linné** (Skolgatan 45; 011-46-1810-2000), overlooking the Linnaeus Garden.

What to Eat

Dine at the **Kung Kråll** (St. Persgatan 4), which serves contemporary Swedish cuisine, including exquisite lamb with lingonberry sauce; at **Hambergs Fisk** (Fyristorg 8), which specializes in fish and shellfish; and at **Tzatziki** (Fyristorg 4), with a terrace overlooking the river. An afternoon can be pleasantly whiled away at **Ofvandahls** (Sysslomansgatan 5) with sandwiches, pastries, and conversation.

If you like herring (*Clupea harengus*), you'll have many opportunities to enjoy it in Uppsala, where it is found in unimaginable plenty, pickled or covered in various sauces. Even my herring-loving husband agrees, however, that a nonexpert should be wary of Surströmming, the fermented herring that comes in a bulging can (the sort of can that our mothers taught us to recognize as the portent of death by botulism). Although apparently perfectly safe, Surströmming is the definition of an acquired taste. It seems to be a food eaten (as ultrahot chili peppers often are) as a ritual of regional identity and bonding. Swedes admit this readily, and Surströmming is a source of jokes and merriment.

What to Do

The **Linnaeus Garden** (27 Svartbäcksgatan) is Sweden's oldest botanical garden. It is open from May through September; the adjacent **Linnaeus Museum** is open from June to mid-September.

Uppsala offers many museums within walking distance of one another. For inspiration, visit the **Fredsmuseum**, or **Peace Museum** (in Uppsala Castle). The **Carolina Library** (Dag Hammarskjöldsvag 1) contains remarkable artifacts and rare books. Among the many striking exhibits in the **Gustavianum** (Akademigatan 3) is the Augsburg Art Cabinet, a seventeenth-century museum-in-miniature whose 1,000 items include shells, a dried alligator, and a silver sink. **Uppsala Cathedral** (Domkyrkoplan 753), the largest church in Scandinavia, is the resting place of Carl Linnaeus and of the Swedish statesman Dag Hammarskjöld.

Several excellent day trips can be made from Uppsala. The historic **Botanical Trails** of Linnaeus wend through woods and fields adjacent to the city. A few miles away is the idyllic **Hammarby** (pictured above), a country manor house where Linnaeus summered. And three miles north is **Gamla Uppsala**, the site of some of Scandinavia's most ancient monuments.

For information about special programs for the **Linnaeus tercentenary** in Sweden, contact Linné 2007 (www.linne2007.se).

and then across the river into the cobbled old quarter. Uppsala's buildings tend toward a palette of subtle clay reds and Tuscan yellows, and in the oblique late-afternoon sun, the city glows as if illuminated from within. There is not much Swedes can do about their long, dark winters, but they are masters at coaxing light with color and candles, crystal and mirrors. In the evenings, nearly every window holds a candle, a sight that can make you positively glad for darkness.

Close by the riverbank are the historic garden and house of Carl Linnaeus. His fame has dimmed over the centuries, and if you recall his name but can't precisely place him, you have plenty of company. Although I knew he was a legendary taxonomist, I was vague on his coordinates. His name sounded Latin; was he ancient? Even scientists and horticulturists now rarely recall the full Linnaean résumé: eighteenth-century botanist, physician, traveler, early ecologist, lover of order, and giver of names. Drawing on towering predecessors, including John Ray of England and Joseph Pitton de Tournefort of France, Linneaus established the classification system at the heart of modern biology, as well as the practice of identifying all living things with a two-word Latin name—*Homo sapiens*, for example.

The sections of Uppsala we walked that evening look much as they did in 1728, the year Linnaeus arrived in the city, rustic and penniless but already a passionate student of nature, especially plants. The son of a rural vicar, Linnaeus gained entrance to Uppsala University to study with the eminent medical professor Olof Rudbeck the Younger—all botanical knowledge then being under the aegis of medicine. By 1741, "Linné," as the Swedes call him, was renowned throughout Europe, his endeavors beyond thrilling in an era when voyagers to faraway lands were revealing a previously unimagined plenitude of species. For several heady decades, his sunny house and garden were the equivalent of a modern research institute; by the end of his life, Linnaeus had given new scientific names to no fewer than 12,000 plants and animals.

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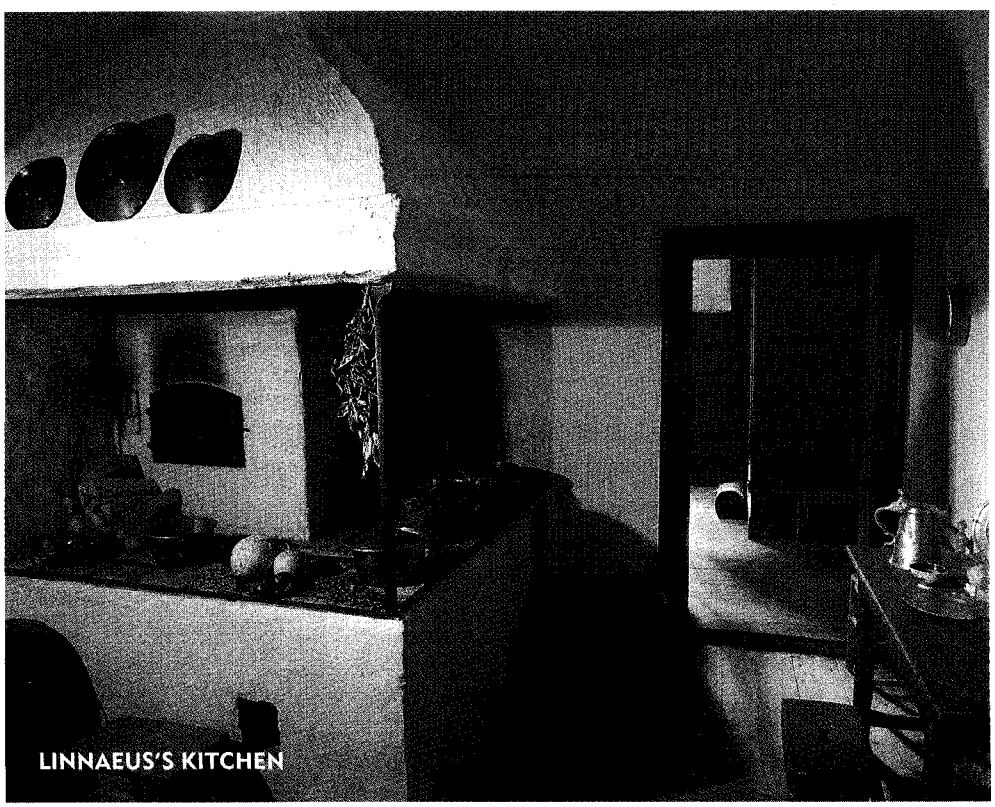
THE LINNAEUS GARDEN and house museum

The next morning, after a smorgasbord breakfast (herring for believers like Peter, native blueberries for me), we set forth toward the Linnaean grounds. Passing through the entrance gates, we were also entering an eighteenth-century idea of order. Before us stretched a two-acre walled garden laid out in the geometric style of a baroque pleasance—with cone-shaped topiary, boxwood hedges, beds in tidy rows, and a shimmering lily pond. It was as if we had tumbled into the interior of a panoramic sugar egg.

The garden's neoclassical Orangery, once Linnaeus's greenhouse, now holds a cheerful exhibit on botanical history, where we boned up on binomial nomenclature, learning how Linnaeus had supplanted the long, unwieldy phrases once used for identification with a simple convention: genus followed by species descriptor. He named many plants and animals for their telling physical traits (the enormous red



LINNAEUS'S KITCHEN

TOP: ANDERS DAMBERG/UPPSALA TOURISM; BOTTOM RIGHT: KALBAR/UPPSALA TOURISM

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deer *Cervus elaphus*), others after figures in mythology (the beautiful blue-green *Papilio ulysses*), and yet others for his mentors and foes (the scraggly weed *Siegesbeckia orientalis* immortalizes one of his critics).

For all its charm, the garden was, and is, a teaching garden, a living museum of some 1,400 historic plants—most remarkably the Siberian corydalis, a hardy yellow wildflower that arrived in 1765 as a gift from the Finnish naturalist Erik Laxman and has survived continuously for three centuries, even through many decades when the garden was abandoned (it looked like a potato patch, one nineteenth-century pilgrim remarked in dismay). Many other plants were germinated from the hundreds of seeds sent to Linnaeus by Empress Catherine II of Russia. Supreme horticultural care is now needed to prevent, as much as is possible, the various species from cross-fertilizing—a great irony, given that for much of his life Linnaeus operated under the medieval theory that saw Nature as unchanging. Still, he felt the theoretical fault line trembling. Seeing the actual, changeful behavior of plants in his garden, he began to suspect—a hundred years before Darwin—that new species were somehow emerging. Pondering how to reconcile this evidence with orthodox theory, the devout Linnaeus proposed that the new species had *always* existed—as *potential* in the fixed plan of Creation!

The epic advances that occurred in this garden suggest large and interesting questions, including, What do we really mean by *order*? Anyone who has ever tried to organize an ordinary clothes closet has glimpsed the abyss that lurks in taxonomy. Massive uncertainties arise because, as Stephen Jay Gould once memorably put it, classifying is not a "glorified form of filing," but a proposal about the nature of reality itself.

The handsome house where Linnaeus lived and tackled these questions is tucked into the southwestern corner of the garden, its rooms chock-full of aura. Standing for some minutes in the worn hollow in the floor where Linnaeus stood to lecture, I felt the kind of pleasantly eerie transport that I did upon seeing Faulkner's handwritten pencil notes looping along the walls of his study in Mississippi. Every room of the Linnaeus house contains gems: an amber-toned globe (with but a few dots on the American continent), a silver bowl for wild strawberries, a shaman's magic drum from Lapland.

Not far from the garden are several splendid museums: the Gustavianum, which houses scientific exhibits and spectacular artifacts, including a thermometer made by Uppsala-born Anders Celsius himself; the Carolina Library, which contains a book in which the seventeenth-century polymath Olof Rudbeck the Elder argues, apparently seriously, that Sweden was the origin of Everything; and the new Fredsmuseum (Peace Museum), in the depths of Uppsala Castle, where we were reminded that Sweden—now justly renowned for diplomacy and humane social policies—was once enmeshed in conflict, ruling an expanding Baltic empire with a brand of militarism its neighbors have still not entirely forgotten. By Linnaeus's era the empire was collapsing, and Swedes were generating new economic ideas. Linnaeus, for one, proposed to substitute native resources for imports: he urged his countrymen to use swan-feather pens and to ride elk instead of horses, and he tried to "teach" tropical plants to grow in Sweden. Although tea and melons spectacularly

So ancient it is mentioned in Norse myths, the Uppsala region was home to pagan kings whose gods included Thor and Odin.

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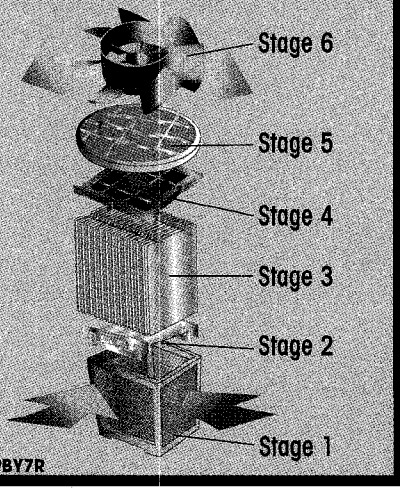

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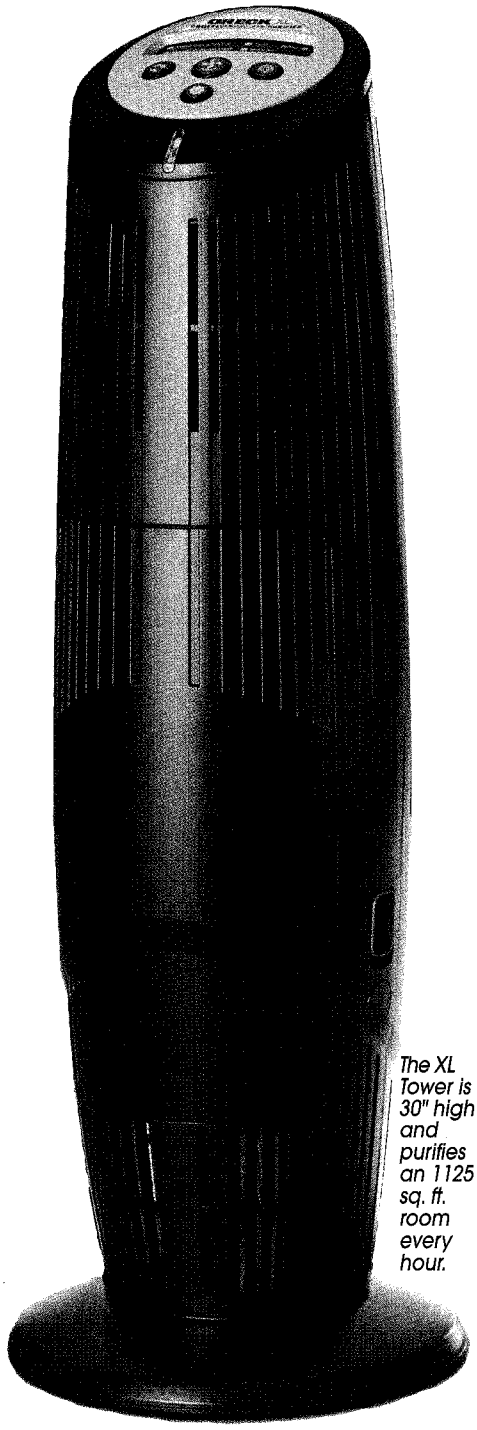

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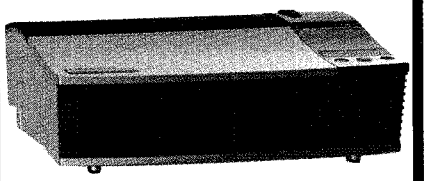

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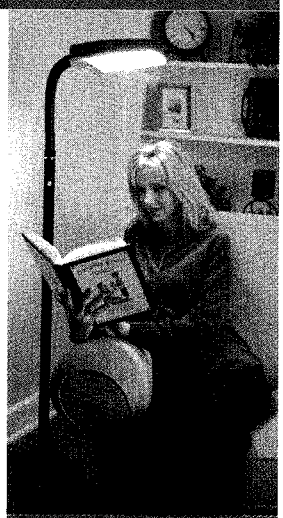

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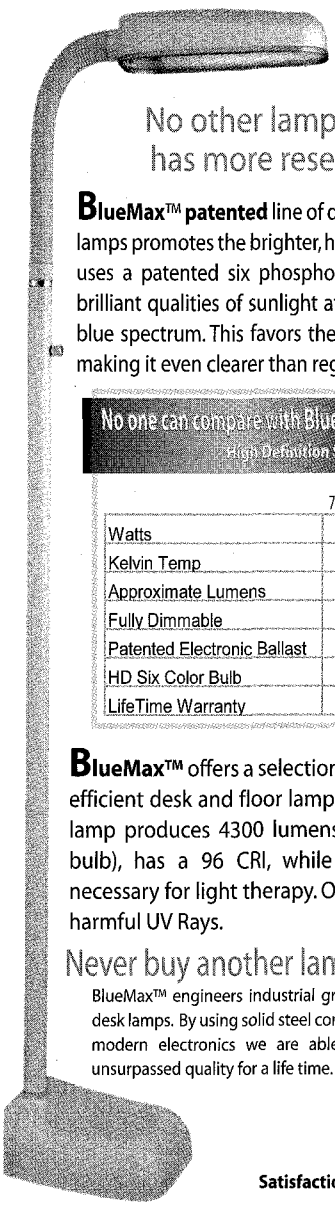

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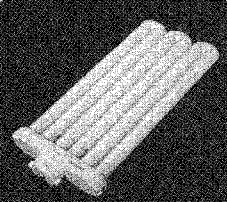

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failed to thrive at 60 degrees N, Linnaeus did succeed in helping to cultivate the enduring Swedish love of nature and science. He was also a showman, fond of wearing his Lapland costume to parties, and one can equally imagine him serving today as an EU minister working to stem global warming, or as the host of a popular TV science show (he could ride in on an elk).

Emerging from the eighteenth century, Peter and I were reluctant to reenter modern times abruptly. So we stopped off first at Ofvandahls, the city's beloved nineteenth-century *konditori*—a café-cum-shrine to philosophy, conviviality, and butterfat, where faded blue wallpaper, worn velvet couches, and clouded gilt mirrors create a rumpled, inviting atmosphere. Here generations have met to gossip, romance, and philosophize, fueled by sandwiches, tea, *kaffé*, and a glistening assortment of baked goods, including the Vienna, the finest pastry I have ever eaten. I once chanced to mention Ofvandahls to a cosmopolitan executive of a Swedish technology company, and the name had the effect on him of a Proustian cookie, transporting him instantly back to his youthful university days and long afternoons of idealistic talk.

Like much of Sweden, Uppsala is in the midst of a very Linnaean-spirited culinary trend that champions local foods such as cloudberries, chanterelle mushrooms, tangy Västerbotten cheese, and turbot with truffles. On our last night in town we dined at our favorite Uppsala restaurant, the Kung Kråll, which serves a fresh take on Nordic cuisine in a beautiful, understated room overlooking Gamla Torg, the city's oldest square. With our waiter's encouragement, we overcame our hesitation and ordered *Rangifer tarandus*, an indigenous food of the land (named, of course, by Linnaeus). The reindeer steak was delicious, and I am daring to hope that Santa will continue to visit our house anyway.

Emily Hiestand is the author of *The Very Rich Hours* (1992), a collection of travel essays, and a contributor to *Home Ground: Language for an American Landscape* (2006).

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FOOD

Banning trans fats probably makes sense from a public-health standpoint—but will the doughnut survive?

Fat City

BY CORBY KUMMER

In December, to the delight of many cardiologists and the dismay of many doughnut lovers, the New York City Board of Health voted to ban artificial trans fats from restaurants, school cafeterias, pushcarts, and almost every other food-service establishment it oversees, which includes most everything except hospitals. Trans fats don't occur naturally in the things people like but feel guilty eating, or at least not at high levels (there are small proportions in the fat in meat and dairy products). But artificial ones are plentiful in commercial foods, because they are easy to use, cheaper than natural fats, and keep practically forever. Trans fats are made by pumping hydrogen gas into liquid fats usually in the presence of nickel so that they will remain solid at room temperature, like butter and lard; and they have the same wonderful properties in pie crusts, cookies, and cakes. Crisco, still generic for solid shortening made by partial hydrogenation (of cottonseed oil), soon became the "sanitary" choice for pie crust and fried chicken, making pastry almost as flaky and skin almost as crisp as lard does.

But starting in the 1970s, a time of general fat panic related to heart disease, trans fats began to look as bad for cholesterol levels as the dreaded saturated fats, and in the 1990s the picture got worse. Trans fats, long-term studies reported, not only raise "bad" cholesterol (LDL); they also lower "good" cholesterol (HDL)—which not even saturated fats do. They look about as bad for the arteries as a fat can be. A 2002 consensus report from the National Academies of Sciences' Institute of Medicine called the relationship between trans-fat consumption and coronary heart disease "linear" and stated that the only acceptable level of trans fats in the diet was zero. The next year the Food and Drug Administration required food processors to list trans-fat levels on nutrition labels along with saturated fat. When the rule went into effect, in January 2006, public awareness of trans fats went up, and the stage was set for the New York City ban.

Thomas Frieden, New York's health commissioner, was already unpopular among libertarians. An epidemiologist and doctor whose speciality is infectious disease, he advocates the blunt instrument of regulation, often over the current public-health approach to most problems, which emphasizes education programs that encourage people to make healthy choices. Frieden made international news by leading the charge to pass the city's comprehensive smoking ban, which has been duplicated across the country and the world. He believes that government should make the healthful choice the default, and that eliminating trans fats will do that, just as fluoridating water and getting the lead out of paint did.

Why an outright ban? Asking nicely didn't work. Starting in June of 2005, the city sent information on why and how to avoid trans fats to 30,000 restaurants and food-service establishments and to 200,000 clinics and community centers; it also provided training to 7,800 restaurant operators. A year later, the share of food-service establishments using trans fats—half—hadn't budged. With the

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support of Michael Bloomberg, Frieden's health-conscious boss, the city's board of health passed the proposed ban.

Libertarians were newly displeased, as legislators in California and Massachusetts began calling for similar bans. Chicago, which last summer enacted a widely ridiculed (and flouted) ban on foie gras, was also said to have trans fats in its sights. Columnists began asking exasperated what-next questions: Salt, a perennial runner-up to fat in the sin sweepstakes? Sugar? Whole milk? Alcohol, again?

Boston, with a similarly activist commissioner and a bold, public-health-minded mayor, Thomas M. Menino, was reported to be the next large city considering a ban. That commissioner, John Auerbach, is my spouse, so I followed the debate closely. I attended a meeting of the Boston Public Health Commission board (a meeting open to the public and press) and listened to the drafters of the New York ban narrate a PowerPoint presentation by conference call. The board was interested in the practicalities of enforcing the ban. I was interested in the practicalities of how small-business owners could follow the new rules—and how cooks could give customers the flavors and textures they were used to.

The New York presenters were reassuring, if short on details. Restaurant inspectors would simply add questions about trans fats to their normal checklist, scanning menus for items likely to contain them—say, cake mixes and frozen french fries—and asking to see labels for all cooking fats. It would add just a few minutes to the usual hour-long inspection. As for telling restaurants how to substitute other fats and where to buy them, the health department planned to contract with culinary educators to teach at workshops and to staff technical-assistance help lines.

It seemed clear that restaurants would be left with plenty of questions, and I had a few of my own. I made an appointment to talk to Frieden, and to see several cooks whose businesses would be significantly affected by the ban. I also learned a lot about doughnuts—including that I like them more than can be good for me, whatever the fat.

A youthful forty-six, and thin, as you would expect, Frieden is both plain-spoken and sure he is right. The morning I visited him, in the health department's WPA-era headquarters in Lower Manhattan, he told me that he and his communications director, Geoffrey Cowley, had just been wondering why his initiatives were so frequently "mis-spun" as the work of the "nanny state." He presents himself more as an emergency repairman. Little of what he does, he said, "would be necessary if our health-care system worked—if every person had a doctor, continuity of care, and that doctor had access to their records." Better labels are all well and good, but "we don't want to exhort people to look at labels for trans fat," he said. "We want people to walk into a restaurant and not worry there's an artificial chemical in their food" that is killing them. A city trans-fat ban, he says, could prevent 500 premature deaths a year from heart disease.

I asked Frieden if he was trying to do what the federal government would not: force fast-food chains to remove trans fats. Kentucky Fried Chicken has already replaced its trans fats, as has Wendy's; Disney, Starbucks, and other companies have also gotten on the bandwagon. But McDonald's has been dragging its heels. It loudly announced, in 2002, that it would remove trans fats from all its food, but never got around to taking them out of its french fries—by far the biggest source, and the greatest challenge for texture (the original fat in McDonald's french fries was the lard-like beef tallow). Now it and every other chain unwilling to abandon the New York City market will have to reformulate their menus, and given research costs and economies of scale, the changes are likely to be national, not just regional. "Nothing like a deadline to focus the mind," Frieden said.

Wasn't New York's ban a case of governing the country from one city—and wasn't it really aimed at obesity? Frieden emphatically rejected the idea, saying that his fiduciary responsibility was solely to the citizens of New York City. The ban was meant to reduce premature deaths from heart disease, no more and no less. And he wasn't depriving people of pleasure. "We're not going to desalinate New York," he said, although he sounded as if he'd like to. "We're not going to ban eggs and ham." The science on trans fats, he said, had come clear slowly, as had the science on the effects of secondhand smoke. But once it did, it did decisively, and he had to act.

DOUGHNUT HEAVEN

Since he began frying doughnuts in his East Village basement twelve years ago, using his North Carolina baker grandfather's recipe, Mark Isreal has made himself and his doughnuts New York City landmarks, selling to carriage-trade shops like Dean & Deluca and Zabar's and coyly (and correctly) refusing to ship them anywhere. What sets his doughnuts apart is the quality of the ingredients, particularly the butter—yes, doughnut batter has a lot of it—and the flavorings.

These days practically the first thing a visitor sees at the Doughnut Plant, Isreal's utilitarian Lower East Side shop, is a sign: NO TRANS FATS. Liquid oil (he fries in corn oil) is no problem for yeast doughnuts—airy, if very large, delights, which he makes in flavors like Valrhona chocolate and pistachio. But cake doughnuts are hard to make without trans-fat shortening, which thickens when it cools and gives Dunkin' Donuts' and other good commercial cake doughnuts the velvety, mouth-coating texture that virtuous corn oil can't quite match.

Isreal is as secretive about his recipes as he is talkative, so he wouldn't tell me which three milks he uses for Tres Leches, the best of his cake doughnuts. But I suspect that condensed or evaporated milk, sweet and very thick, is his workaround for the mouthfeel challenge. None of his doughnuts are ascetic, but these are lush.

Doughnut Plant, 379 Grand Street, New York City, 212-505-3700.

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So far, the chains that have initiated trans-fat removal have been the ones whose image depends on health or whose owners are concerned with health: the Tennessee-based Ruby Tuesday; the Boston-based Legal Sea Foods (whose owner, Roger Berkowitz, has long been ahead of every health curve); and Au Bon Pain, another Boston-based chain.

When I visited Au Bon Pain's headquarters and test kitchen, the head baker, Harold Midttun, told me that he had sold his family bakery after a heart attack at age thirty-nine. Once he got to Au Bon Pain, he took immediate interest in its mission to find substitutes for trans fats in cookies, muffins, and bagels; with Thomas John, the executive chef, and John Billingsley, the chief operating officer, he organized many tastings to sample new formulations alongside the originals. What were the tastings like? I asked the three men. Fattening, Billingsley replied.

Breads and even muffins were relatively simple; cookies were not. Chocolate-chip cookies, for instance, need the snap and solid texture that butter—or shortening, its much less expensive substitute—gives them when they cool. The company intended to "be zero trans fat" by April of this year, but not all the strudel problems (or the cream-soup ones, for that matter) had been solved.

I realized that saying trans fats are "totally replaceable," as Frieden repeatedly does—asserting that they are merely used for texture, not taste—is easier for a health official than for a product developer. It should be simple, yes, to get rid of an entirely artificial ingredient that is used mostly for the convenience of industry. Researchers have been working for decades on substitutes, which should by now be as plentiful and as cheap as trans fats.

But they're not. Midttun and John gave the example of their blueberry muffins, which used to be the highest in trans fats, as a challenge they had finally met. They did it by using a new fat and adding several other ingredients to mask its taste and still get the same mouthfeel. The ingredients, they told me, included

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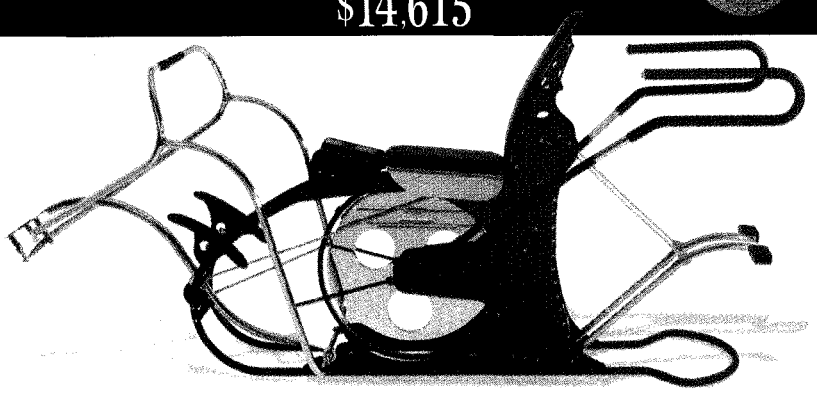

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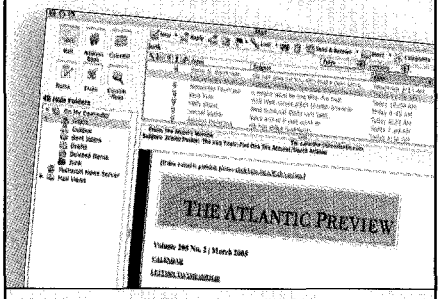

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oat bran, ground golden flaxseed, soy protein, and emulsifiers. Individual bakers, I thought, were sunk: They'd never be able to figure all that out, even with frequent calls to a city help line.

And the substitute fats have problems of their own. Earth Balance, a blend that Au Bon Pain uses, includes some palm-fruit oil, which is 50 percent saturated. Very highly saturated tropical oils, like coconut, were the target of a widely publicized 1994 exposé of movie popcorn by the Center for Science in the Public Interest. Now, the current thinking runs, saturated fats are not quite as bad for you as trans fats—but they're still bad, and the American Heart Association has expressed concern about using them as a substitute for trans fats.

Dunkin' Donuts, another national chain based in the Boston area, says that it has tried twenty-two different fats in sixty-seven tests, hoping to get the same texture its doughnuts now have. Recognizing the difficulty posed by doughnuts and other fried doughs, New York modified its regulation to give doughnut makers eighteen months to come up with suitable alternatives. If Dunkin' has found a good substitute, it isn't saying.

Doughnut Plant, a cult fry shop on Manhattan's Lower East Side, is a poster child for the ban: It proudly announces that it fries only in corn oil (see "Doughnut Heaven," page 122). Mark Isreal, the eccentric, garrulous owner, certainly doesn't compromise on quality or expertise with his doughnuts. When I went to see him, I found myself following Frieden's example: He told me that at a health-department staff gathering after the ban was passed, he "couldn't stop eating" Isreal's doughnuts.

But when I tried similar flavors at Dunkin' Donuts, I saw why lard and solid shortening have always been best for deep frying (Dunkin' has never used lard): The resolidified fat gives the interior a texture that oil simply cannot. Yeast-raised doughnuts are less problematic, because they should remain airy. But in a cake doughnut, the right texture is as unmistakable as the firm crumble of a butter cake—which, of course, requires a fat that solidifies at room temperature. A good cake doughnut has the substance of pound cake. It won't get that from corn or canola oil.

It's a confusing picture. Looking into trans fats got me hooked on an extremely fatty food I hadn't eaten since childhood (positively unpatriotic, as John T. Edge's monograph *Donuts: An American Passion* engagingly makes clear). Frieden readily admits that banning trans fats won't help reduce obesity. Posting calorie counts where you pay for your food—a less-noticed regulation he got passed at the same time as the trans-fat ban—might help. Or it might just make people eat more doughnuts: A Dunkin' Donuts glazed yeast doughnut has 180 calories, a glazed cake doughnut has 350, a reduced-fat blueberry muffin has 400, and a corn muffin has 510. Getting people to eat less fat and more fresh and unprocessed food—the real path to health—can't be done by any regulation yet proposed by the "food police."

Still, it does seem like a good idea to remove artificial substances from the food supply, especially if trans fats result in thousands of needless deaths a year. And the international headlines the initiative produced will most likely make people think more about the healthfulness of the food they eat, and restaurateurs about what they put into their food, all for a relatively modest expenditure on the city's part. As my spouse points out, regulations get headlines; education programs on the dangers of saturated fats and how to find, buy, and cook better food—programs in which his department invests heavily—get yawns. I'll be watching follow-up studies to see whether the cure for trans fats, which in many cases is to replace them with highly saturated fats, is worse than the disease.

And when the beleaguered cooks at Dunkin' Donuts finally solve the riddle of removing trans fats, as New York City says they must by July of next year, I'll be eager to learn how they did it. At the risk of revealing a rival's trade secret, may I suggest oat bran and golden flaxseed?

Corby Kummer is an *Atlantic* senior editor.

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CULTURE AND COMMERCE

It is the same in the eye of every beholder.

The Truth About Beauty

BY VIRGINIA POSTREL

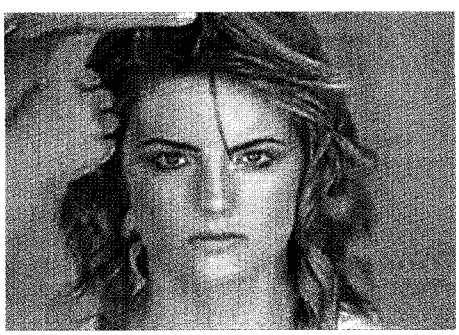
Cosmetics makers have always sold "hope in a jar"—creams and potions that promise youth, beauty, sex appeal, and even love for the women who use them. Over the last few years, the marketers at Dove have added some new-and-improved enticements. They're now promising self-esteem and cultural transformation. Dove's "Campaign for Real Beauty," declares a press release, is "a global effort that is intended to serve as a starting point for societal change and act as a catalyst for widening the definition and discussion of beauty." Along with its thigh-firming creams, self-tanners, and hair conditioners, Dove is peddling the crowd-pleasing notions that beauty is a media creation, that recognizing plural forms of beauty is the same as declaring every woman beautiful, and that self-esteem means ignoring imperfections.

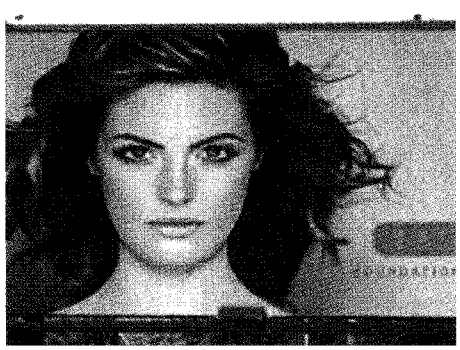
Dove won widespread acclaim in June 2005 when it rolled out its thigh-firming cream with billboards of attractive but variously sized "real women" frolicking in their underwear. It advertised its hair-care products by showing hundreds of women in identical platinum-blonde wigs—described as "the kind of hair found in magazines"—tossing off those artificial manes and celebrating their real (perfectly styled, colored, and conditioned) hair. It ran print ads that featured atypical models, including a plump brunette and a ninety-five-year-old, and invited readers to choose between pejorative and complimentary adjectives: "Wrinkled or wonderful?" "Oversized or outstanding?" The public and press got the point, and Dove got attention. Oprah covered the story, and so did the *Today* show. Dove's campaign, wrote *Advertising Age*, "undermines the basic proposition of decades of beauty-care advertising by telling women—and young girls—they're beautiful just the way they are."

Last fall, Dove extended its image building with a successful bit of viral marketing: a seventy-five-second online video called *Evolution*. Created by Ogilvy & Mather, the video is a close-up of a seemingly ordinary woman, shot in harsh lighting that calls attention to her uneven skin tone, slightly lopsided eyes, and dull, flat hair. In twenty seconds of time-lapse video, makeup artists and hair stylists turn her into a wide-eyed, big-haired beauty with sculpted cheeks and perfect skin. It's *Extreme Makeover* without the surgical gore.

But that's only the beginning. Next comes the digital transformation, as a designer points-and-clicks on the model's photo, giving her a longer, slimmer neck, a slightly narrower upper face, fuller lips, bigger eyes, and more space between her eyebrows and eyes. The perfected image rises to fill a billboard advertising a fictitious line of makeup. Fade to black, with the message "No wonder our perception of beauty is distorted." The video has attracted more than 3 million YouTube views. It also appears on Dove's campaignforrealbeauty.com Web site, where it concludes, "Every girl deserves to feel beautiful just the way she is."

Every girl certainly wants to, which explains the popularity of Dove's campaign. There's only one problem: Beauty exists, and it's unevenly distributed. Our eyes and brains pretty consistently like some human forms better





EVOLUTION: Stills from Dove's viral-marketing video

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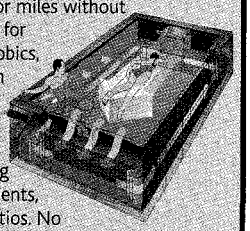

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than others. Shown photos of strangers, even babies look longer at the faces adults rank the best-looking. Whether you prefer Nicole Kidman to Angelina Jolie, Jennifer Lopez to Halle Berry, or Queen Latifah to Kate Moss may be a matter of taste, but rare is the beholder who would declare Holly Hunter or Whoopi Goldberg—neither of whom is homely—more beautiful than any of these women.

For similar reasons, we still thrill to the centuries-old bust of Nefertiti, the Venus de Milo, and the exquisite faces painted by Leonardo and Botticelli. Greta Garbo's acting style seems stilted today, but her face transcends time. We know beauty when we see it, and our reactions are remarkably consistent. Beauty is not just a social construct, and not every girl is beautiful just the way she is.

Take Dove's *Evolution* video. The digital transformation is fascinating because it magically makes a beautiful woman more striking. Her face's new geometry triggers an immediate, visceral response—and the video's storytelling impact is dependent on that predictable reaction. The video makes its point about artifice only because most people find the manipulated face more beautiful than the natural one.

In *Survival of the Prettiest: The Science of Beauty*, Nancy Etcoff, a psychologist at Harvard Medical School, reported on experiments that let people rate faces and digitally "breed" ever-more-attractive composite generations. The results for female faces look a lot like the finished product in the Dove video: "thinner jaws, larger eyes relative to the size of their faces, and shorter distances between their mouths and chins" in one case, and "fuller lips, a less robust jaw, a smaller nose and smaller chin than the population average" in another. These features, wrote Etcoff, "exaggerate the ways that adult female faces differ from adult male faces. They also exaggerate the youthfulness of the face." More than youth, the full lips and small jaws of beautiful women reflect relatively high levels of female hormones and low levels of male hormones—indicating greater fertility—according to psychologist Victor Johnston, who did some of these experiments.

More generally, evolutionary psychologists suggest that the features we see as beautiful—including indicators of good health like smooth skin and symmetry—have been rewarded through countless generations of competition for mates. The same evolutionary pressures, this research suggests, have biologically programmed human minds to perceive these features as beautiful. "Some scientists believe that our beauty detectors are really detectors for the combination of youth and femininity," wrote Etcoff. Whether the beauty we detect arises from nature or artifice doesn't change that visceral reflex.

Perhaps surprisingly, Etcoff herself advised Dove on several rounds of survey research and helped the company create workshops for girls. Dove touts her involvement (and her doctorate and Harvard affiliation) in its publicity materials. She sees the campaign as a useful corrective. Media images, Etcoff notes in an e-mail, are often so rarefied that "they change our ideas about what people look like and what normal looks like ... Our brains did not evolve with media, and many people see more media images of women than actual women. The contrast effect makes even the most beautiful non-model look less attractive; it produces a new 'normal.'"

Dove began its campaign by recognizing the diverse manifestations of universally beautiful patterns. The "real women" pictured in the thigh-cream billboards may not have looked like supermodels, but they were all young, with symmetrical faces, feminine features, great skin, white teeth, and hourglass shapes. Even the most zaftig had relatively flat stomachs and clearly defined waists. These pretty women were not a random sample of the population. Dove diversified the portrait of beauty without abandoning the concept altogether.

But the campaign didn't stop there. Dove is defining itself as the brand that loves regular women—and regular

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women, by definition, are not extraordinarily beautiful. The company can't afford a precise definition of *real beauty* that might exclude half the population—not a good strategy for selling mass-market consumer products. So the campaign leaves *real beauty* ambiguous, enabling the viewers to fill in the concept with their own desires. Some take *real beauty* to mean "nature unretouched" and interpret the *Evolution* video as suggesting that uncannily beautiful faces are not merely rare but nonexistent. Others emphasize the importance of character and personality: Real beauty comes from the inside, not physical appearance. And *Advertising Age*'s interpretation is common: that Dove is reminding women that "they're beautiful just the way they are."

Another Dove ad, focusing on girls' insecurities about their looks, concludes, "Every girl deserves to feel good about herself and see how beautiful she really is." Here, Dove is encouraging the myth that physical beauty is a false concept, and, at the same time, falsely equating beauty with goodness and self-worth. If you don't see perfection in the mirror, it suggests, you've been duped by the media and suffer from low self-esteem.

But adult women have a more realistic view. "Only two percent of women describe themselves as beautiful" trumpets the headline of Dove's press release. Contrary to what the company wants readers to believe, however, that statistic doesn't necessarily represent a crisis of confidence; it may simply reflect the power of the word *beautiful*. Dove's surveys don't ask women if they think they're unattractive or ugly, so it's hard to differentiate between knowing you have flaws, believing you're acceptably but unimpressively plain, and feeling worthlessly hideous. In another Dove survey, 88 percent of the American women polled said they're at least somewhat satisfied with their face, while 76 percent said they're at least somewhat satisfied with their body. But dissatisfaction is not the same as unhappiness or insecurity.

Like the rest of the genetic lottery, beauty is unfair. Everyone falls short of perfection, but some are luckier than others. Real confidence requires self-knowledge, which includes recognizing one's shortcomings as well as one's strengths. At a recent conference on biological manipulations, I heard a philosopher declare during lunch that she'd never have plastic surgery or even dye her hair. But, she confessed, she'd pay just about anything for fifteen more IQ points. This woman is not insecure about her intelligence, which is far above average; she'd just like to be smarter. Asking women to say they're beautiful is like asking intellectuals to say they're geniuses. Most know they simply don't qualify.

Virginia Postrel is an *Atlantic* contributing editor and the author of *The Substance of Style* (2003) and *The Future and Its Enemies* (1998). Her blog, the Dynamist, can be found at www.dynamist.com/weblog.

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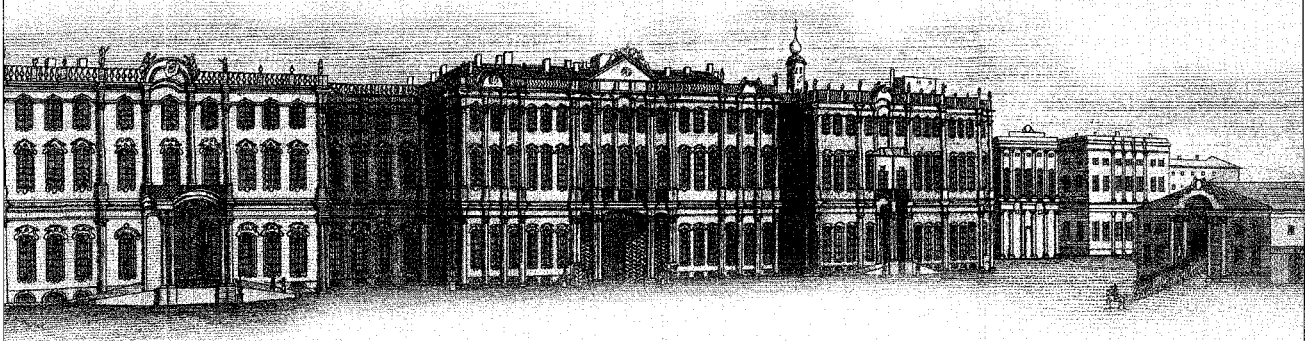

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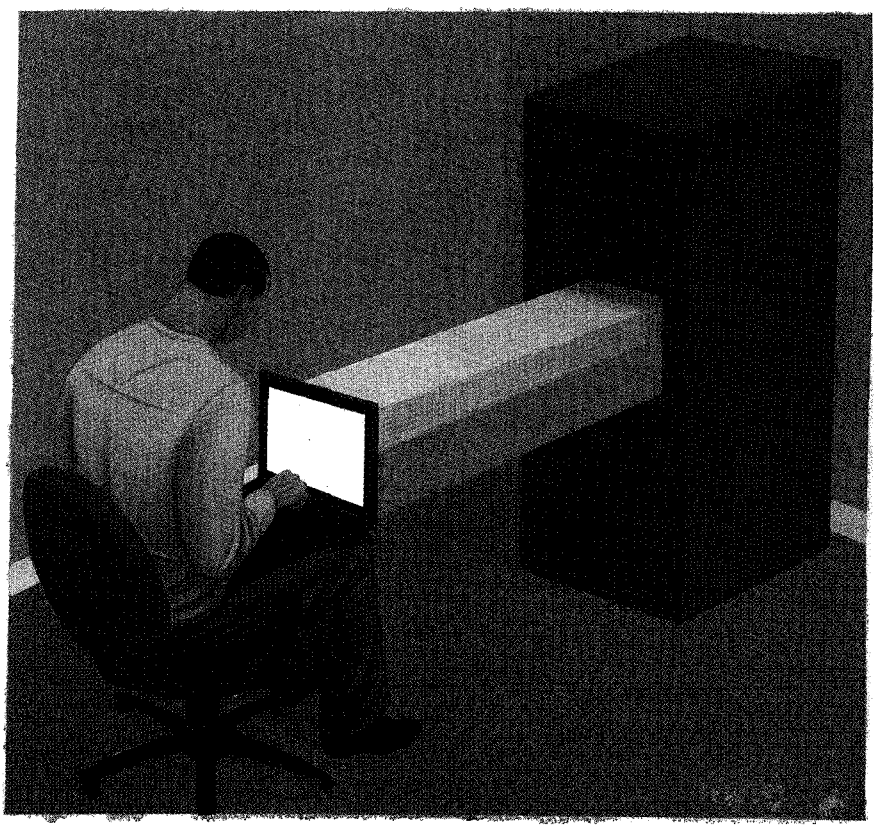

My computer is about a thousand times faster than the one I first used in the 1970s. But it doesn't feel particularly fast. I still spend time waiting for it to do things, especially start up or shut down or do anything involving a PDF file. The programs I use all day run at what seems a normal, not an astonishing, speed.

What does astonish me is how much data today's computers can handle—which is where a lot of the new computing power has gone. They can create, transmit, format, and index extremely large files, and they can store practically anything. Every digital picture I have ever taken, every message or Web clip I might conceivably want to see again, every version of every document I have ever created—these all fit on my 100-gigabyte laptop hard drive, with room to spare. But the endlessly increasing data we see and store creates a risk of "loss" in two important forms.

Conceptually, the material you want can seem lost if you can't find it amid all the unrelated files and messages. This is the problem that search engines help solve for the Internet, and that programs that sort and organize, like those described in previous columns ("The Electric Mind Meld," July/August 2006; "Making Haystacks, Finding Needles," November 2006), can offset on your own computer. Information can also be lost physically, through fire, theft, disk crash, whatever—and this is not even to mention the obsolescence of computers and formats themselves (see "File Not Found," September 2006). For many people, the most damaging potential data loss would be their digital photos, since these proliferate so rapidly, are usually impossible to replace, and are so rarely printed out or preserved in other forms.

As long as people have used computers, they have been lectured to about the importance of making frequent backups to avoid the heartbreak of data loss. But the task has seemed so boring that non-geeks keep putting it off. Among the many nice features of the new backup systems I'm about to describe is that they make the process far more convenient and automatic than it has been before. Some even make it seem interesting.

In theory, every computer user should have a "backup portfolio," with diversified holdings like those in an investment portfolio. At a minimum, copies of data should exist in different physical locations, so that a fire in your office doesn't wipe out both your computer *and* the nearby stack of backup DVDs. That is the main weakness of the fastest and easiest form of storage, the stand-alone external hard drive—for instance, Western Digital's My Book Pro, which costs about $300 for a 500-gigabyte capacity. Seagate, Sony, Buffalo Technology, and many other companies make similar, good systems for both Macs and PCs. The biggest size normally available is one terabyte, or more than 1,000 gigabytes. Such a drive is convenient because your computer sees it as just another hard drive (the D:\ drive, for instance, if you

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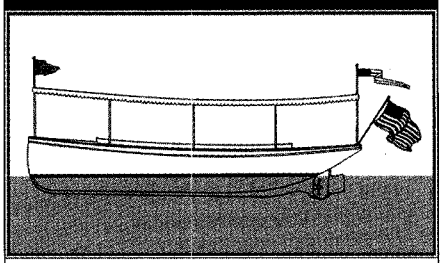

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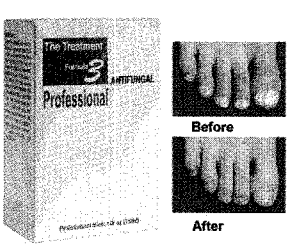

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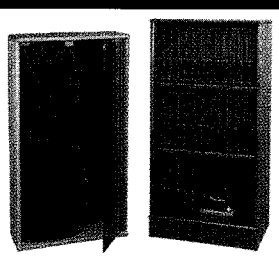

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already have C:\), which in turn allows quick copying of your main drive's contents onto the backup drive. External drives have become cheap enough to be a sensible standard investment for any user—for instance, as a repository for video or audio files, like movies or iTunes libraries, that take up a tremendous amount of space and could be replaced if lost. But for data you can't afford to lose, they're not enough.

GIZMO WATCH

TO DO: BE GENEROUS

GlobalGiving.com shows one way the Internet can transform how you support causes you believe in. The company ("Councils of War," February 2002) has tried to create a marketplace, like eBay's, whose large number of sellers will attract large numbers of buyers, and vice versa. In this case the sellers are groups, mainly in poor countries, that are launching or running environmental, public-health, educational, or human-rights projects and the like. The buyers are people who can contribute amounts ranging from a few dollars to a few thousand dollars. Everything that is intriguing about online shopping—easily comparing offerings, finding possibilities you hadn't been aware of—is here as well. I imagine most people will end up giving more than they intended and feel good about it.

For the gadget-minded: a new utility called GyroQ, by the English company Gyronix, sounds ridiculously simple. It pops up when you press Ctl+Q, at any time, in any program, and lets you jot down an idea, a phone number, a Web site, or a to-do item. Then, when you're ready to pay attention, it lets you collect and sort everything you've noted, for appropriate actions. It works with Mindjet's MindManager and is at its best with ResultsManager, from Gyronix. I use the system all day, every day. The three programs combined cost well over $300 and won't be worth it for everyone. You can judge for yourself with a free trial.

Portable, lighter-weight external drives are a possible alternative, but have their own drawbacks. They're about twice as expensive per unit of storage as non-portables (a 100-gigabyte portable drive from Seagate, for example, costs roughly $150). To my mind they're a nuisance to carry around, and easy to lose or damage. I am much more enthusiastic about newly elegant approaches to protecting data, each involving the Internet, exemplified by the programs FolderShare and Mozy.

FolderShare, which runs on PCs and Macs, is a way to make sure you have backups of your most recent work available on all your computers. It was created by a small company in Austin that Microsoft acquired late in 2005. Microsoft has since incorporated FolderShare into its rapidly growing set of Windows Live Web-based services. (The extent of Windows Live offerings, current and planned, would surprise most people. See http://ideas.live.com and http://get.live.com.) Many Windows Live services have free basic versions and more advanced ones for a fee. The FolderShare.com Web site says cryptically that the service is "now free."

In essence, FolderShare is a way of synchronizing files. You revise a document at work, and you want to see those changes when you open it on your laptop at home. You create a new spreadsheet at home, and you want it to be available on your office desktop. File synchronization programs have been around for years—the best known is Laplink, which I've used since the 1980s—but FolderShare represents a big step forward. You choose which directories on one computer you'd like to have match with another, for example, the "Documents" and "Photos" directories on each machine. Then, whenever both of the computers are connected to the Internet, FolderShare automatically updates the older version. (If you have edited the same file on two machines, it will back up both versions.) Its operations are calibrated to happen "in background," and they place no detectable drag on your normal computer work or Internet activities.

This system is easier and more automatic than carrying a memory stick or portable hard drive for transferring files. I like it better than Laplink, since Laplink works best when two machines are in the same place, connected by physical cables or a local WiFi network. (Laplink can operate over the Internet too, just not as easily.) FolderShare has one pitfall I am aware of. If you have set it to mirror files as soon as they have changed, then any destructive change you make on one machine—deleting material you meant to keep, accidentally corrupting a file's format—can show up quickly on the other, overwriting a previously good backup. But you can choose settings that delay synchronization before files are changed.

You can see other valuable, if slightly less polished, online sync systems at BeInSync.com and GoodSync.com. Any of them can make modern working life easier—with minimal effort, you can have the same information on all your machines—and each of them provides an extra element of backup protection for your files.

Mozy illustrates the other elegant approach to backup. Like Carbonite, mentioned here briefly last year, Mozy mirrors your computer's data not on a detachable drive or another machine but somewhere in the galactic cloud of Internet storage. There are many contenders in the online backup field, with new ones appearing constantly, and constantly changing price plans and features. Mozy, Carbonite, SOS Online Backup, and Xdrive, with different strengths and limitations, are among many worth checking out.

What the programs have in common is automatic, round-the-clock, online backup. You indicate the data you want protected. Carbonite, which offers unlimited storage for a flat rate of $49.95 per year, has as its default setting copying all your documents, videos, pictures, music, and similar irreplaceable information. You can also choose which folders or files you want it to store (it's pointless to back up program files, which usually require fresh installation to work properly). The

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systems can take hours or days to perform the initial backup, but from that point on, whenever you're connected to the Internet, they constantly update the stored version to reflect what's on your computer. Then if trouble arises—flood, fire, mere disk crash—you can reinstall your programs and download and restore the data you have lost.

The programs have been racing to introduce new features. An important one is fine-grained "incremental" backup. This is the ability to analyze specific differences between old and new versions of a file, and save only what has changed, rather than copying the entirety of a new file over the old one. "Version tracking" is the ability to keep a running record of specific changes, so a user can re-create previous versions of a file. The best programs can back up an "open" or "locked" file—for instance, an Outlook file containing e-mail—even while you are using it.

SOS is the most expensive of the backup programs, at $1,000 or so per year, and generally offers a complete range of advanced features. Mozy has incremental and version features; Carbonite says it will have them soon. These programs and SOS can back up "open" and "locked" files.

Carbonite, made by a company based in Boston, is notably easy to configure and use, and its flat-pricing scheme for unlimited storage, which it pioneered (and which Mozy now offers), will be the best deal for many people—and will encourage them to back up everything.

Carbonite, Mozy (from a company in Salt Lake City), and Xdrive (from a subsidiary of AOL) differ in numerous subtle ways. Carbonite and Xdrive are on the whole simpler to set up and use—Mac-like, if you will. Mozy can be more specifically tweaked to your own tastes, like a PC. Xdrive works on both PCs and Macs; Carbonite and Mozy are for now just for PCs, although both say a Mac version is in the works. All of the programs have free versions or free trials available. Find the one you like best—and then remember to use it.

James Fallows is an *Atlantic* national correspondent.

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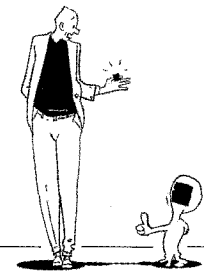

WORD FUGITIVES

BY BARBARA WALLRAFF

Reasonable people may disagree: Is a husband who puts his friends to shame by lavishing presents on his wife a *wanker*, a *schmuck*, maybe even an *adulterer*, as a few readers of the October Word Fugitives suggested? Some readers seemed more interested in expressing a point of view than in coining a word. John Keresty, of Vernon, N.J., wrote, "I've known more of these guys than most. The vast majority are philandering, boisterous blowhards who shower favors on their wives/girlfriends for their personal aggrandizement. And they just love the uncomfortable position that places the other males in."

Or is such a husband a *keeper*? That's how Frank Schellenberg, of Palo Alto, Calif., sees it. He explained, "Funny you should ask about a word for a husband with excessive generosity in the very month we celebrated our tenth anniversary. I had ten bouquets sent to my wife's office in a daily stream of flowers, and we ran off for a weekend on the California coast all by ourselves, leaving our son with a friend for a sleepover (which he loved)." Many other readers sided with Schellenberg, among them Charlotte Wilson, of Leader, Saskatchewan, who called such a man a *wifesaver* and asked, "Where do I find one?"

Thomas S. G. Lawrence, of Staten Island, N.Y., thought the man might be described as *"a Sir Galahad among Galahadn'ts."* Marc A. Werlinsky, of Broomall, Pa., suggested *doting Thomas.* Lori Peterson, of Gregory, Mich., wondered if the guy was *sexpectant.* Martha Hill Schafer, of Seattle, thought he was *sui generous.*

A few people suggested that the existing word *uxorious* would fill the bill. Others played with that word to coin *luxorious, uxorbitant, uxtentatious* (this one comes from Patricia Pando, of Bainbridge, Ga.), and *oneuxmanship* (Thomas Fowler, of Lake Jackson, Texas). And Thomas Chesney, of Memphis, Tenn., takes top honors for his term for the husband in question: an *uxorbitionist.*

The other fugitive sought in October was a term for either "the barrier erected by headphones" or the "tiny country" a headphone wearer might be said to inhabit. Abby Huntington, of Bala Cynwyd, Pa., wrote, "Headphones are an accessory that renders the wearer inaccessible; hence

headphones are an *inaccessory.*" Alex Scherr, of Athens, Ga., wrote, "As a proud iPod user, I've been harassed and ridiculed by friend and stranger alike for my blissful disconnection when wearing headphones. No matter: despite the social costs, I still find pleasure in my splendid *ausolation.*" Julie R. Voss, of Knoxville, Tenn., wrote, "As a college professor, I watch students disappear into this 'tiny country' on a daily basis." Voss has named it *Disctopia.* But according to Elaine Bakal, of Brookline, Mass., "It's called *I-topia.*"

A few readers argued that the name ought to be contingent. For instance, William R. Phillips, of Seattle, wrote, "If the earphones are used to seek refuge from one's wife, they are called *dear plugs.*" Steve Hight, of Fruita, Colo., wrote, "The state to which one travels while listening depends upon one's musical preferences. A person who prefers 1980s stadium rock escapes to *Rusha,* for example, whereas one who prefers peaceful music departs for *Tranquilvania.* Another fashionable destination remains the *United Singdom.*"

Dave Macy, of North Haven, Maine, takes top honors. Presumably a jazz fan, he hopes that headphone wearers enjoy their "nights (and days) in *iTunesia.*"

Now BETSY CHILDS, of Norcross, Ga., writes, "I need a word for the very vulnerable moment when, to pass through airport security, I must remove my shoes. This is the great equalizer: in sock feet, no one is dignified."

And JEFFREY BLEDSOE, of Weatherford, Texas, writes: "I'd like a term for the exclamation we use to warn friends that the person they're talking about is approaching them from behind. Usually, the exclamation is the approaching person's name, as a 'welcome' to the conversation."

Send words that meet Betsy Childs's or Jeffrey Bledsoe's needs to Word Fugitives, The Atlantic Monthly, *P.O. Box 67375, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467, or visit the Word Fugitives page on our Web site, at www.theatlantic.com/fugitives. Submissions must be received by March 31. Use the same addresses to submit word fugitives that you'd like* The Atlantic's *help in finding. Letters become the property of Word Fugitives and may be edited.*

Readers whose queries are published and those whose words are singled out for top honors will each receive, with our thanks, a selection of recent autographed books by Atlantic *authors. The next installment's correspondents will be sent* On The Wealth of Nations, *by P. J. O'Rourke;* Boomsday: A Novel, *by Christopher Buckley; and my own* Word Fugitives.

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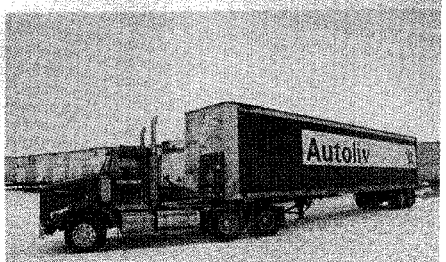

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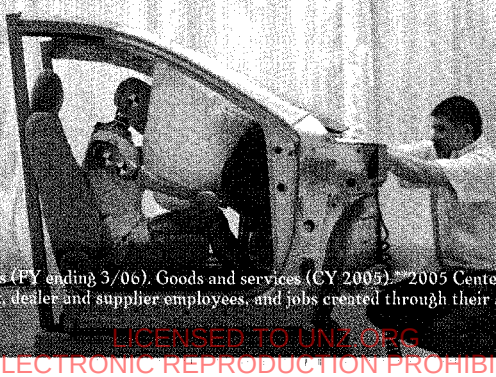

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